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Isaac Sharp : an apostle of the nineteen

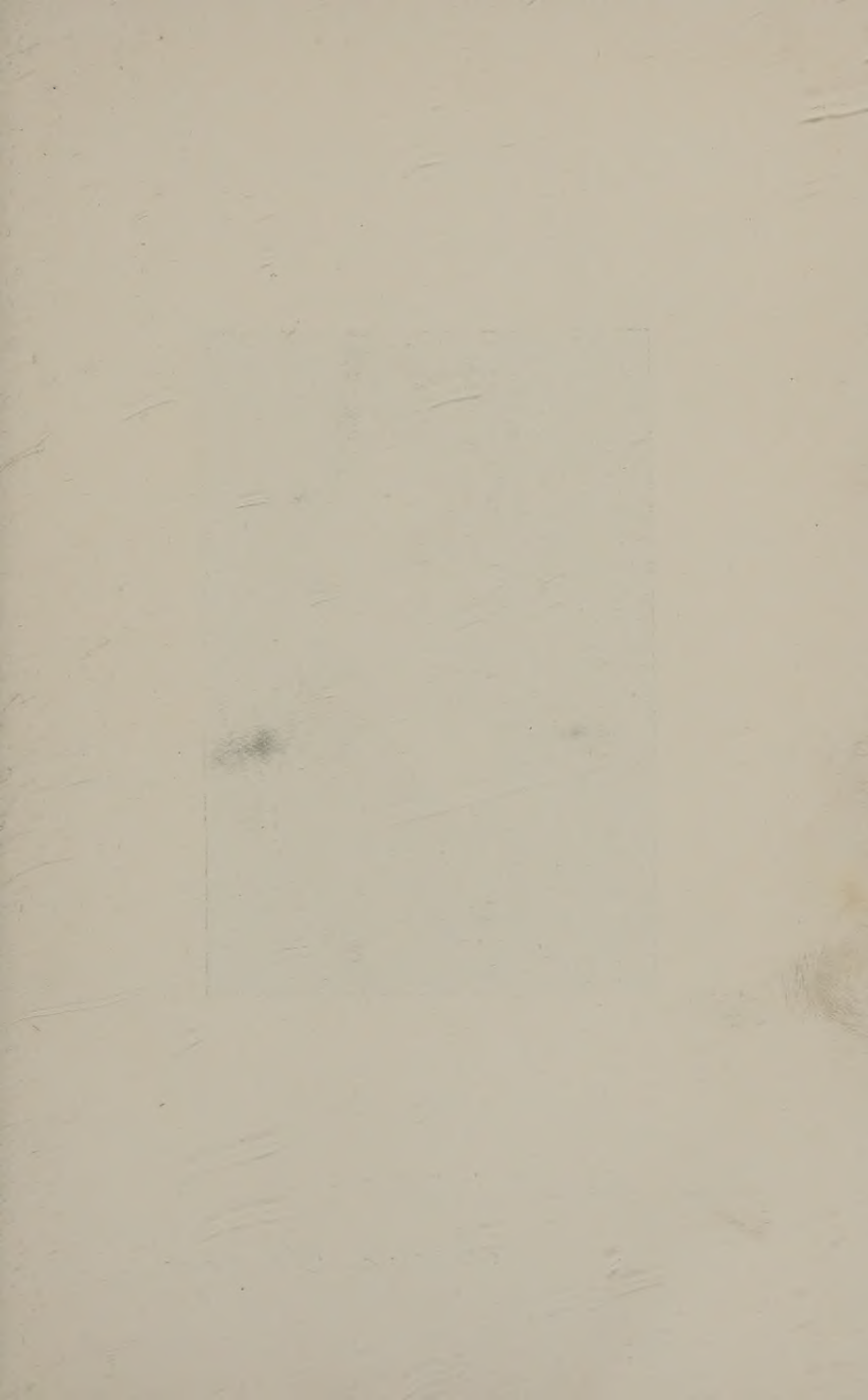
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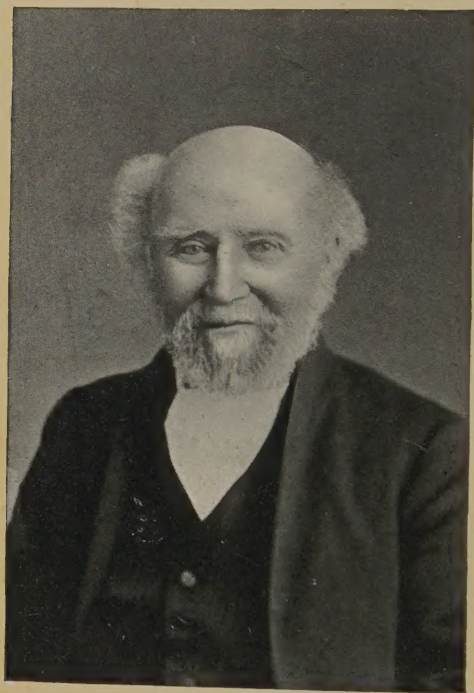


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ISAAC SHARP,
AN APOSTLE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.





My Affectionate Friend
Isaac Sharp

ISAAC SHARP,
AN APOSTLE OF
THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

BY

FRANCES ANNE BUDGE,

AUTHOR OF

"A MISSIONARY LIFE: STEPHEN GRELLET"; "THE BARCLAYS OF URY";
"ANNALS OF THE EARLY FRIENDS"; "THOMAS SHILLITOE, SHOEMAKER AND MINISTER," &c.

WITH INTRODUCTION BY

SIR JOSEPH W. PEASE, BART., M.P.

EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAP.

"I trust the all-creating voice, and faith desires no more."

LONDON:
HEADLEY BROTHERS,
14, BISHOPSGATE STREET WITHOUT, E.C.

1898.

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AUTHOR'S NOTE.

It was the suggestion of Isaac Sharp that after his death his diaries should be placed in my hands for the preparation of a biography.

From these, and many other sources, I have tried truly to pourtray his character and tell to the glory of God the story of a life which was in some of its phases unique.

FRANCES ANNE BUDGE.

Edmar Lodge,
Mannamead,
Plymouth.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE.
PORTRAIT - - - - - - -	<i>Frontispiece.</i>
EARLS COLNE SCHOOL - - - - - - -	II
DAIRY KNOLL, MIDDLESBROUGH - - - - - - -	70
MODE OF TRAVELLING IN SOUTH AFRICA - - - - - - -	82
ISAAC SHARP'S HOME AT ETTINGTON - - - - - - -	155
ISAAC SHARP AND DR. DIXON IN JAPAN - - - - - - -	200
MAP OF CHINA - - - - - - -	218
MEMORANDUM - - - - - - -	280
ETTINGTON MEETING HOUSE - - - - - - -	288

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER.		PAGE.
I.	INTRODUCTORY MATTER - - - -	I
II.	EARLY LIFE - - - -	9
III.	NORWAY, ICELAND - - - -	24
IV.	FAROE ISLANDS, ICELAND - - - -	36
V.	GREENLAND, LABRADOR - - - -	46
VI.	CHARACTER DEPICTED - - - -	62
VII.	SOUTH AFRICA - - - -	79
VIII.	SOUTH AFRICA - - - -	94
IX.	SOUTH AFRICA - - - -	109
X.	MADAGASCAR, AUSTRALASIA - - - -	120
XI.	UNITED STATES, MEXICO, HOME LIFE - -	136
XII.	ILLNESS IN PARIS - - - -	157
XIII.	TO GO OR STAY? - - - -	174
XIV.	INDIA, JAPAN, OREGON - - - -	191
XV.	RECOVERY FROM ALARMING ILLNESS - -	208
XVI.	CHINA - - - -	228
XVII.	AMERICAN YEARLY MEETINGS - - - -	245
XVIII.	NORWAY, FRANCE - - - -	260
XIX.	SYRIA - - - -	273
XX.	LAST DAYS - - - -	279

INTRODUCTION.

It has been kindly suggested to me by those immediately interested in the following memoirs of Isaac Sharp that I should preface the narrative of his life with a few introductory lines.

However incompetent I felt for such a task I accepted it ; I could not well refuse it, as from my boyhood I had known him ; his personal kindness to me and mine had been constant, and when many years of close business relations were closed, in his long absences from home we carried on a very constant correspondence, as old and mutual friends interested in each other's welfare and pursuits.

Isaac Sharp came to Darlington when I was very young. My first clear recollections of him I think date from the election of 1832, when my father, Joseph Pease, was elected member for South Durham. At that time I remember Isaac Sharp coming in the early morning into my father's dressing-room to discuss the duties of the coming day. In this room I also was an early guest, and soon appreciated the kindness of the other visitor to the running about and probably troublesome little boy.

He lived not far from my father's house, and these morning visits soon became a regular habit. His kindness and his chat at these early calls made him a favourite with my sisters and myself. I can still picture him as he was then.

In those days railways were few, and the transit over them slow and uncertain. The employment of the horse was more to be depended upon on a journey than the locomotive. Isaac Sharp's dress was that of Friends of the time. He was always exceedingly neat: a "plain" cut coat and waistcoat, and often light cloth breeches and top boots. Then as I got older came the days when he, my father, and I rode some eleven miles to the collieries. Generally we breakfasted on arrival, having been previously fortified for the journey by a stirrup cup of new milk and a large slice of bread and butter. Breakfast over—whilst minutes were being read and made, and plans and "dip workings" discussed—I was perhaps sent round the pit heaps with a foreman to see the coals drawn, or the begrimed pitman coming up from his work; or I amused myself in the colliery office with pencil and paper at a high desk, perched on a stool, about whose unusual height I wondered as I climbed up or descended its perpendicular sides.

When I entered the offices in Darlington in 1845, Isaac Sharp was head of the Middlesbrough Estate Office, whilst I was obtaining my education in book-keeping in the banking office below. For the general management of the Middlesbrough Estate, I think Isaac Sharp was responsible for some twenty years. In those days he was interested in, or a witness of, the various events that laid the foundation of the town. He saw it commence from the farmhouse, and grown ere his death to one of some 90,000 inhabitants.

In the early days of his Christian ministry I was several times with him at meetings held in the more remote districts of Cleveland and Durham—in these places his warm-hearted Gospel addresses were welcomed by his hearers, many of whom were descended from Friends.

I was one of the Committee of Ayton School when he served as a zealous and efficient secretary, and I followed him as secretary to the Darlington Friends' Essay Society, to which he contributed both in prose and poetry, the latter often in pieces of decided character and merit.

Isaac Sharp had naturally, no doubt, a decidedly sanguine temperament, and perhaps to such a man faith and strong belief in an unseen guiding power come more easily than to one of a more lymphatic temperament.

His long absences in Gospel missions necessitated arrangements which freed him from Middlesbrough cares and left him at liberty to proceed on his Gospel errands. He had a faith which often seemed to others to remove mountains. He heard the call, knew the voice, and was ready to obey!

I have sat beside his bed when to all human appearances his days were numbered, when he would assure me that his God and Master had still work for him to do—that He in whom he placed implicit faith had made it quite plain to him.

In many of his letters to me the same feeling was expressed, till at last I always felt certain, that that which he had been allowed to foresee would actually come to pass.

His journeyings were long and arduous—from the Moravian Settlements in the North, to the Cape of Good Hope in the South, and far away up the wide water navigations of central China in the far East—everywhere teaching, preaching, comforting, strengthening, to the cheer and comfort of those who in their very isolated positions stood really in need of encouragement.

Some of his addresses in returning the certificates for service which he had held for years, often amidst illness

and delays, were, to those that heard them, teaching lessons of God's faithfulness to a servant full of faith. On these occasions he told of his journeys from place to place—in the storm and in the sunshine. He narrated, with an eloquence and pathos difficult to describe, how he had been marvellously directed and sustained. His mission was essentially to preach the Gospel of the Love of God to mankind—to impress his hearer with the need of a clear assurance that all was well with his soul, and the importance that, come life or come death, Christ was his and he was Christ's.

I recommend with great appreciation of its contents the study of this book. The perusal of such a life is good food for the soul. It shows to His followers that our God is not a God afar off but One that is very nigh. It proves that those who rely on Him in full faith and with earnestness of purpose are not neglected or alone. It emphatically teaches : " Let us (also) run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."

JOSEPH W. PEASE.

*Hutton Hall,
Guisborough,
31st October, 1898.*

ISAAC SHARP.

CHAPTER I.

“The story of Isaac Sharp’s travel is almost like a story of old romance, travel undertaken in the service of the King of Kings.” *F.H.*

“Only guided by THY light,
Only mighty in THY might.”

Wesley.

9 **D**R. JOHNSON defines an apostle as a person sent with mandates by another, and adds that the word is particularly applied to those “whom our Saviour deputed to preach the gospel.”

A remarkable man has lately passed away from us at the advanced age of ninety years and eight months. A minister of another denomination, after listening to an outline sketch of one of Isaac Sharp’s long mission journeys, said that it seemed to him like a fresh chapter in the Acts of the Apostles. “We have been hearing,” he added, “allusions to agnosticism, positivism, etc., but is not such a life as Isaac Sharp’s an answer to them all! He was physically strong from his temperate habits, spiritually strong from his faith in God.”

But what would the subject of these remarks have said about himself? He would use some such words as these :

“THOU all our works in us hast wrought;
Our good is all divine ;
The praise of every virtuous thought
And righteous word is Thine.”

Nevertheless we remember hearing him say, "May my experience strengthen the faith of all, of the young as well as of the old. None are too old, and none too young, and no service is too near, and no service too far off, if the Lord give the call."

These words were spoken in 1884, soon after his return from a mission journey round the world, when he was giving to a large assembly a brief summary of his seven years' service abroad.

Very remarkable had been his call to that work. During his ministerial service in Denmark he had more than once slept in a damp bed, and this brought on an extremely suffering illness which lasted for twelve months. He was seventy years of age, and his strength was so much prostrated that his friends feared he would not recover. Whilst still very weak, but quite free from fever and with a perfectly clear mind, a kind of vision came to him. He writes: "I almost felt the great white messenger was there, and almost bade him welcome—welcome too the scythe and the hour-glass, if only they bare me safely over to the other side. Then came a voice rich and deep in its intensity: 'Yea, I shake once more, not the earth only, but the heavens too, that that which never can be shaken may remain.' Then another voice so full of pathos, tenderness, and love: 'I trod the wine-press, trod it all alone, trod it for thee, trod it for all my willing-hearted followers, till time her course hath run. Not yet the end shall be. A little more of suffering, and if thou art faithful, not a little more of service. So be thou faithful unto death, and I in my own good time will give thee a crown of everlasting life.' And all within me breathed a deep Amen. Then followed further that which afterwards came to pass."

In the spring of 1877, Isaac Sharp took the preliminary step of informing the Friends of the Darlington district, at their Monthly Meeting, of the wide prospect of service which lay before him. Ere he did so, he knelt

in prayer, beseeching God's help and guidance, and that a baptism of the Spirit might be mercifully granted to the Meeting, and the will of the Lord be done. For the space of half-an-hour, amid a deep and very solemn stillness, he was engaged in unfolding the burden which had rested on him for many years, startling in its successive stages, and almost overwhelming in its effect. After nearly an hour spent in solemn deliberation and outspoken utterance, in remarkable unanimity and without a dissentient voice, a minute of record was made, as the basis of a ministerial certificate. This certificate encouraged Isaac Sharp, "in the love of God and in simple dependence upon Him, to proceed to Cape Town, there and elsewhere in South Africa to await the guiding hand of the Lord for such service as He may be pleased to appoint. After that, if it be His will, and health and strength be granted for it, to proceed to Madagascar, Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand; and thence to California and other portions of North America, for such service among Friends and others there as the Lord Jesus may be pleased to appoint and prepare the way for."

From 1877 to 1884 he was engaged in the fulfilment of this service. In the address given after his return and to which allusion has been made, he spoke with beaming countenance and, as he himself said, "with a heart full of joy and a cloudless mental atmosphere," of God's goodness to him on this journey to which "three-score years and ten had been the threshold, and Norway the stepping-stone. May our hearts be stirred," he said, "as we think of the unfailing faithfulness of Him who is God over all, blessed for ever! I can testify to the wonderful guidance of the great Head of the Church. More than once during my journeyings life has trembled in the balance, and my faith has been tried to a hair's breadth, once, less from bodily danger than from exercise of mind, but the words came to me, 'Have not I sent thee?'—and there was a great calm."

Before leaving England, he had called on Dr. Moffatt, who gladly conferred with him about the visit to Africa. But Dr. Moffatt, knowing well the dangers and difficulties of travel on the Dark Continent, especially for an aged man, gave no hint with regard to Kuruman, his own old station, never supposing that his caller would penetrate the interior. We remember Isaac Sharp's expressive words in reference to the state of Africa while he was labouring there: "It was like a seething cauldron, needing only a few sticks more to boil over. Two merchants, who had kindly entertained himself and his companion, almost blamed them for not making a longer stay with them. But Isaac Sharp realised that God was hastening him onward, and ten days after his friend and he had taken leave of their kind hosts, the latter were shot down in cold blood by the natives.

When at the Moffatt Institute he was the guest of Mr. Mackenzie, who three months earlier had been told by a coloured person that all the white people were to be murdered, and himself the first. But Mr. Mackenzie did not think it right to leave his post, and these evil designs were over-ruled. The wife of Mr. Mackenzie is a daughter of Dr. Moffatt, and Isaac Sharp described husband and wife as a noble pair of missionary workers. Isaac Sharp's bedroom had been Dr. Moffatt's study. After hearing of the murder of the merchants, a sort of terror stole over the Kuruman territory, and all the more, because it was said that the murderers were riding about demanding clothing and goods. Isaac Sharp, nevertheless, felt bound in spirit to go on to Shoshong, and in order to reach that place he must pass through Motito.

A knock was heard at the door of the Moffatt Institute. Was it friend or foe? And "foe" was the first thought. But the door was opened to admit Mr. Hookey, a missionary from Motito, who had been warned by some of the natives that it would be dangerous for him and his family to remain there, as no white man would be safe.

Under these circumstances Isaac Sharp felt a very solemn responsibility with regard to his plans, and the following night was one much to be remembered as he lay awake communing with his Heavenly Father. The very place Mr. Hookey was fleeing from must be passed through in order to reach Shoshong. With childlike confidence he prayed to be shown what he ought to do. Then he says, "It came upon my spirit with a clearness that could scarcely be surpassed, that, whatever the issue, I must go. There was no doubt upon my mind that it was the Spirit of the Lord bearing witness with my spirit." On the following morning he said to his companion, Langley Kitching, "I must go forward." He had, however, no wish that his friend should take the same course, unless he too believed it to be the right thing to do, and this was the case.

On their way to Motito, they met Mr. Hookey, who had gone back to fetch his family, fleeing from that place to take refuge in the Moffatt Institute. Motito was reached by the light of the stars and on a Saturday night. How about quietly spending the morrow there, in that place where it was said that no white man would be safe? Was it not just what God seemed bidding them to do? So they "outspanned," the tired oxen rested, and a fire was lit in the open air, flashing its light on the many dark faces that gathered around. Were they the faces of friends or foes? Then night came on, and the travellers committed themselves to the Lord's care. "I lay down to rest," said Isaac Sharp, "without the shadow of a fear; to the Lord's praise be it spoken!"

On the following day the Friends met and encouraged the little flock there who were as sheep without a shepherd. The only European left in the place spent the peaceful day with the travellers.

In the next stage, perils of another kind had to be faced, for the way now lay through the desert fittingly called "The Thirst." Until the third day, the poor oxen could have

nothing to drink, and on their powers of endurance the lives of the wayfarers depended. But the goal was reached in safety. Why had God guided them there? On arriving at Shoshong, they found that a wave of heavenly blessing had been passing over the place. Twelve hundred people gathered in an open air meeting for Isaac Sharp to address through an interpreter. They were in Khama's country, but Khama was unknown to history then. He took part in the Sunday services and Isaac Sharp, who saw a good deal of him, described him as being "every inch a chief."

"Never would I have raised my finger against my father," he said, "when speaking of how his heathen parent had tried to bring about his death and that of a brother."

Khama had heard of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and it was arranged that a little meeting should be held on its behalf. Khama said he thought it was a good thing that there should be a society for sending the Bible all over the world, and he thought so good a society deserved encouragement. Some merchants who were not far off came to the meeting. It was suggested to them that they should put their hands into their pockets, the deeper the better, and give Isaac Sharp some money for the Bible Society. The manner of the collection was unusual.

"Now you must give a five pound note," was said by one.

"Of course you must do the same," said another. Then followed a cross fire between the second speaker and a third. Ivory tusks of great value were also brought.

One Sunday while in Basuto land, and when nearly five hundred people were assembled for worship, a terrific storm came on. Whilst Isaac Sharp was preaching, his interpreter said, "You had better sit down for your voice cannot be heard." Just after he had resumed his seat, a vivid flash of lightning passed above his head and reached a baby who was lying on the bench. It left no trace but one little blackened toe, yet it was as the chariot of fire to

take the little one to heaven. "Oh! my baby!" was the poor mother's cry.

In that meeting was a woman who had lost a part of one finger, and strange to English ears was the story she told about it. When a girl of seventeen she had been seized as provender for a feast. At the preparatory bleeding of her finger she not unnaturally fainted, and was then left alone. When consciousness returned, she looked around, saw the preparations for cooking the meal, and then ran for her life!

In Madagascar, Isaac Sharp experienced much kindness from the missionaries of the London Missionary Society, as well as from those who were members of the Society of Friends. As he saw how much God's blessing had rested on the labours of the faithful men and women who were spending and being spent in the work, he felt as if he could almost say with Simeon, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

Australia was the land to be next visited. "As to the Aborigines," he writes, from Tasmania, "*not one remains*. 'Kung Billy' is no more! There is something to me very sad in the fact that the Aborigines fade away before the white man. 'The survival of the fittest,' say some, but the summing up appears to me rather on this wise, 'the weakest go to the wall.'"

"I once felt," he said, "when upon the great ocean as if the ship were a mere speck in creation, and I a dot on that speck; yet I was cheered and comforted because the Lord had given me work to do for Him. And the words were brought home to my heart, 'As thy days so shall thy strength be.' Sometimes I was brought low physically, but a sweet word was given me: 'Forward, and fear not, let thy faith be firm.' I knew where the faith came from, and I was thankful for it."

In one of his letters he writes of being "well content to be guided along 'whithersoever the Governor listeth,' if only in love and mercy so it may be."

When Stewart Island was being visited at the Lord's call, he was told by a Christian school-master there, how earnestly he had been praying that someone might be sent to cheer them. "The days call for diligence," he writes, "nevertheless, 'make haste slowly' is still the watchword, and this—I hope rightly—puts a drag upon the wheel, though very mindful that the days are rapidly passing by, for, should it so be, this day three weeks will score me seventy-five."

When Isaac Sharp at length reached Mexico, he found that, for the first time for many years, that country was clear of quarantine. His favourite saying, quoted from one of our old divines, was, "They who mark the hand of Providence shall never want a Providence to mark."

Before he started on this long missionary journey, he met in an English railway carriage a gentleman of his acquaintance, who, *à propos* of that which lay before him, asked if he were going to take some brandy with him. Isaac Sharp, who was an abstainer, said that he had not thought of doing so. His friend rightly reminded him of the delicacy of his health, of the extremes of climate to which he would be exposed, of how often it would be impossible to obtain medical aid, and then, opening his travelling dressing-case, asked his acceptance of a flask of brandy. This kind gift was carried by Isaac Sharp round the world. Seven years later, soon after his return, we heard him allude to this in a large temperance meeting. He spoke of the varieties of temperature he had met with—ice and snow versus tropical heat—and of the hardships to which he had been exposed; sometimes lying down to sleep with no canopy but the starlit sky. Then, with a humorous expression on his ever genial face, he added, "But the other day when I came across my friend I had the pleasure of handing back his kind gift, and of telling him that I had no reason to doubt what the contents of the flask might be, but I had never found a reason for opening it."

CHAPTER II.

“And THOU by reverent love unite my child-like heart to THEE.” *Wesley.*

“Capacity to enter into deeper truth does not depend on talent or study, but on the tenderness with which the soul has exercised itself in daily life, in discerning between good and evil.” *Andrew Murray.*

“**A**S a boy I was early taught to remember always that I was in the presence of God,” said Isaac Sharp, in his old age. He was born at Brighton on the 4th of July, 1806, and bore the same name as his father, whose family had removed from Hampshire, and who was twice married, first to Mary Likeman, and secondly to Esther Thomson, both members of the Society of Friends, which body he had joined. By each of his wives he had seven children and, by a curious coincidence, the same number of boys and girls in each family. The eldest of the first family was Isaac, the youngest, Rebecca, Mrs. Swann, who is still living. The eldest of the second family is Thomson, who survives his brother Isaac; a younger sister was Priscilla, the late Mrs. J. Dunning.

Isaac Sharp's mother died of fever at the age of thirty-nine. On the 10th of December, 1894, he remarks in a letter, “Seventy-nine years ago to-day, I lost a precious mother. I well remember that solemn period and its associations. Our father's grief was intense. They were the days of astrology, and it had been predicted that our mother would take the fever and recover, but that our father would be fever-stricken and die. Our uncle Ebenezer and my father occupied one room that night, and I slept with them.”

Of his mother's grandfather, Matthew Bourne, Isaac Sharp would tell some curious stories. He was a miller, and

in course of time, his mill—built of wood, as was the fashion of those days—had to be removed to another site. This was accomplished by the aid of more than four score Sussex oxen, all yoked and pulling together; a very practical illustration of that old adage, "Union is Strength."

A painting was made in oils to commemorate this wonderful enterprise. In a letter, written in 1891, from "the sea of Japan," Isaac Sharp tells his namesake nephew that he has a photograph of this picture, adding, "And behold of the said Matthew Bourne thou art the great, great grandson."

We learn, too, that Matthew Bourne was the owner of a very intelligent horse, of which an acquaintance one day asked the loan, to "ride as far as Rottingdean." This favour was granted by the good miller, although the idea crossed his mind that perhaps the borrower thought of going further than Rottingdean. Matthew Bourne therefore went into his stable and whispered in his horse's ear :

"Rottingdean, Buck, Rottingdean."

"So," says Isaac Sharp, "Buck trotted along freely till he came to Rottingdean, and until he was fairly beyond its limits. Then, suddenly raising his hind quarters, he left his easily unseated rider behind, and hastened back to his own stable at Brighton!"

How favourably the dumb animal stands out in contrast with the shuffling man who would fain abuse the kindness of a neighbour.

But it is with Matthew Bourne's great grandson that our story has to do. And yet, in these lax days, we cannot afford to miss the lesson of Isaac Sharp's memories of his great aunt, Sarah Glaisyer—the daughter of Matthew Bourne. He writes : "In her widowhood she used to sit at the head of Brighton Meeting, and was most punctual in attending at the time appointed. I well remember her when quite blind leaning on the arm of her daughter Eliza, and reaching the door in the lane, some five and twenty steps from the Meeting-house, as the Palace clock struck the hour :



Photo. by]

EARLS COLNE SCHOOL.

[C. S. Tyler, Earls Colne.

"'Dear Eliza, how late we are!' was her sorrowful plaint."

We smile at this story, but does it not hint at a character "Faithful in that which is least."

Although only four years old at the time of the Jubilee of George III., Isaac Sharp clearly remembered the public roasting of a large ox in the open air during the festivities at Brighton. He was also a witness of the Queen's Jubilee in 1887.

But we must pass on to an old diary, and under date 4th vii., 1817, read some words almost like a prayer: "This day dear little Isaac is eleven years old. Oh, that as he grows in years he may grow in grace, and in the saving knowledge of his Saviour Jesus Christ."

Not his mother's words—she had died more than a year and half earlier—but the words of a mother-like aunt, Elizabeth Likeman. From another entry in "Aunt Likeman's" journal, we find that, about a fortnight after Isaac's eleventh birthday, his father took him *via* London to William Impey's school at Earl's Colne, Essex. Of these school days we have little record, but just one story makes us believe that, as a boy, he was "trusty and true," however full of fun. Nearly four miles from Earl's Colne is Coggeshall Abbey, and there resided the young lady whose heart and hand the schoolmaster was seeking.

"Mine," wrote Isaac Sharp, in his old age, "was the favoured lot to be chosen as the post messenger, bearing the love notes *both ways*. . . ."

"Robert Impey was the name of the schoolmaster's first-born, and a pocket knife was allowed to drop from the *baby hand* into mine, bearing the engraving "R.I. to I.S." After being treasured year by year it has vanished, I know not how. But it is still in my mind's eye a joy for ever!"

A remark made by him in his old age, in reference to a young missionary, helps us to realise some of his own characteristics: "Young, strong, active, and energetic, with apparently little experience to bring him into shape,

there are many experiences lying before him, in all human probability, in which *all* his *gift of exuberance* will be requisitioned, with proof of its not having been given in vain. *I have passed through the like experience*, and know whereof I write."

Of "Aunt Likeman" it is recorded that she had been an extremely small baby, so small indeed that her mother's wedding ring was passed over the tiny foot and ankle, and up to the knee. She lived to old age, one of the quiet hidden lives apparently, whose record is on high. She was given to versification, and the following simple lines would only cause a smile, if we did not read between the lines something of a prayer. They were written on a slip of paper and handed to some gentlemen who were sitting over their walnuts and wine :

"In cracking of nuts it is generally seen,
Not the *shells* but the *kernels* ye crave,
But when on Religion you often contend,
'Tis the *shells* not the *kernels* you have.
True religion alone can nourish the soul,
May this be your chiefest desire ;
Oh ! may you contend for this measure alone
And throw all the *shells* in the fire."

And now, since "the memory of the just is blessed," before giving one more entry about her nephew, from Aunt Likeman's diary, we must quote from a quaintly written little account of herself. It is so brief that it hardly seems to contradict a remark we lately heard from one who has wide experience of human life—"The best work is that which is not reported."

She had joined the Society of Friends at the age of twenty, when residing with an uncle and aunt.

"It may be truly said of this dear Friend that she went about doing good, and willingly spent her time and strength in endeavouring to alleviate distress. She was much respected by many in the higher ranks of life to whom she had an easy access, and when engaged with them in

pleading the necessities of the poor, she frequently had to offer a word in season, expressive of the uncertainty of time and pointing to the hope set before us through the sacrifice and mediation of our blessed Redeemer. She was a faithful stewardess in distributing the alms they entrusted her with, visiting the abodes of poverty and wretchedness, and whilst employed in relieving the needy inmates with the comforts of this life, she was also desirous of ministering to their spiritual wants . . . and often in the accents of Gospel love, had to set forth the abundant mercy of the Saviour of men to repentant sinners. The love of her heavenly Father, through her dear Lord and Saviour, was her only anchor, and she experienced its all sufficiency at the hour of death."

Two years earlier she wrote, under the date, 26. v. 1827: "My dear nephew, Isaac Sharp, left Brighton. Oh, Thou Shepherd of Israel, keep him by Thy mighty power from the snares that surround him. Oh, may he be drawn by Thy precious love," etc. This entry probably refers to her nephew's first business engagement in the establishment of Day and Robson at Saffron Walden.

How were "Aunt Likeman's" prayers answered?

Isaac Sharp, in the last year of his long life, thus alludes to his early religious impressions: "Under a powerful visitation of divine grace, in the abounding love of God in Christ Jesus, the Lord was graciously pleased to accept the surrender of my young heart to Him; and in perfect peace a willingness was mercifully wrought in me to love and serve my Redeemer as He might be pleased to lead the way. There is cause for deep humiliation that the service has been an imperfect one, but over all the mantle of the love of God is spread. Glory be to His holy name for ever!"

He remained at Saffron Walden until he was about the age of twenty-four, and he seems to have attached considerable importance to the influences which surrounded his life there. A little poem, written during that time, is so characteristic that it seems worthy of quotation:

“ Some say that golden days are past,
 And will no more return,
 That, long since, they have breathed their last,
 And yielded to a wintry blast
 Unpitying, cold and stern.

“ To such, by way of a reply,
 My thoughts I will unfold,
Their golden days are not gone by
 Who do not with a jaundiced eye
 Life's chequered scene behold.

* * * * *

“ Then why with sad repining sigh ?
 Are there no tranquil hours ?
 Reigns not the same Great Power on high ?
 Do not the clouds of heaven supply
 Soft and refreshing showers ?

“ Is there no animated sound
 To cheer life's rugged way ?
 Do then the thistles so abound,
 That not one lovely rose is found
 Our labour to repay ?

“ Oh ! weigh it well—nor longer sigh,
 But thus the truth unfold,
Their golden days are not gone by
 Who do not with a jaundiced eye
 Life's chequered scenes behold.”

In an old album we find a little piece, written in the following year, with the title, “ We culled the early saxifrage.” Two verses run thus :

“ We culled the sweet flower and though many a smile
 Was called forth by its overgrown stem,
 Yet a feeling arose in my bosom the while,
 And a thought which I told not to them ;
 And I longed for the pen of some bard to unfold,
 The mental delights which are bought not with gold.

* * * * *

“ Let none then despise this poor spring-blowing flower,
Since it blooms on the verge of the blast,
Nor waits till the sunshine of summer’s bright hour
O’er the heads of a nation has passed ;
But smiling, like friendship, at tempests gone by,
Proclaims the glad tidings that summer is nigh.”

Some of his pieces were humorous ; and like more thoughtful ones, were written for an Essay Society at Saffron Walden called “ The Budget.”

At the age of twenty-four he removed to Darlington, and became the Private Secretary of the late Joseph Pease, the son of Edward Pease, who, with George Stephenson, had made the Stockton and Darlington Railway five years before. Isaac Sharp took an active part, locally, in the General Election of 1832, when Joseph Pease was returned to the House of Commons, being the first Friend who took his seat in that assembly ; for although John Archdale, some time Governor of the Carolinas, was in 1698 elected for Wycombe, Bucks, he did not sit, on account of his conscientious objection to taking an oath.

The year before Isaac Sharp went to Darlington the “ Middlesbrough owners,” of whom Joseph Pease was the chief, had bought the five hundred acres of land on which the town now stands. The estate at first contained only a single farm-house, but is now a large town with 70,000 inhabitants. The development of this estate brought much thought and work to Isaac Sharp, but not to the exclusion of other claims. He accepted the post of Secretary to the Auxiliary Bible Society, and to the Friends’ Public School at Great Ayton, as well as the lighter labour of the Secretaryship of the Friends’ Essay Society at Darlington. Many of his business journeys for his employers became, with their approval, opportunities for religious service.

The writer has heard an old lady Friend allude to being present at the meeting for worship at Darlington in which Isaac Sharp for the first time spoke in the ministry. This was in 1832. We believe that at that time Isaac Sharp

was kindly acting as door-keeper, and that he left his seat and stood in the aisle as he spoke.

His younger brother, John, afterwards Superintendent of the Friends' School at Croydon, writes in his diary in reference to this event, on the day before Isaac's twenty-sixth birthday. It is evident that he is astonished to find that his very lively brother should have such information to confide to him. John writes : " I have received a letter from dear brother Isaac, in which, to my great surprise, he informs me of his appearing in the ministry. This was totally unexpected to me, but I trust that he has been careful in this most important undertaking not to move (in such service) without his Divine Guide. On reading his letter, my heart overflowed with gratitude to the Giver of every good and perfect gift. I felt emboldened to supplicate that my dear brother may experience divine preservation and support."

How truly was that brotherly prayer answered.

John Sharp goes on to say : " Dear Isaac's conflict of mind appears to have been very great, yet abundantly made up to him by the sweet feeling he was favoured with on yielding to the divine requiring."

In a letter to his great friend, Joshua Green, written some five years after leaving Saffron Walden, Isaac Sharp says : " There are many in your circle for whom I feel deeply interested. Gratitude for past kindnesses forbids it to be otherwise." Further on in the letter we get glimpses of his affectionate disposition, when, after alluding with concern to the slight illness of a sister, he goes on to say : " From Brighton I have received but mournful intelligence. My beloved father was seized rather suddenly with rheumatic fever. . . . How tried of late years has been the lot of my beloved parent."

In another letter to this friend he alludes to a most grievous wrong that had been done to his father, and adds the significant words : " I humbly trust, through a power beyond our own, we are enabled to forgive."

But he shares his joys as well as his sorrows with Joshua Green : "My thirty-second birthday finds me thoroughly satisfied that I have not waited in vain. The endeared object of my tenderest affection has consented to be mine, and bright are the beams which illuminate my pathway. Oh, that a grateful sense of mercy, past and present, may more and more fill my heart, and enable me to enjoy such a blessing in the divine favour, giving Him the praise to whom it is due. It is about two years since I first paid my addresses, and truly I have abundant cause for rejoicing, in finding in my dearest friend, Hannah Procter, more than I could reasonably expect, and *all that I could wish*. . . . It is inexpressibly comforting to think of the prospect before me."

In February, 1839, Isaac Sharp married Hannah Procter, daughter of Joseph and Elizabeth Procter of North Shields, and sister of the late Joseph and John Richardson Procter. He was then in his thirty-third year, and his bride had not long passed her thirtieth birthday. The home to which he brought her was in West Terrace, Darlington.

As we write, there lies before us a little faded ornamental card, on which is traced with exquisite neatness in printed characters, almost microscopically small, three verses, bearing the title of "The Benediction." These lines were written at Chester during the wedding tour, and seem to be almost prophetic—

When the bright glow of health its gladness lends,

And pleasure gilds thy sunlit path with joy,

Or when the sombre shade thy step attends,

The glad and sunny vision to alloy—

In weal or woe, Ah ! be it thine to feel

The Rock thy refuge and thy sure reward ;

Wait, humbly wait, and He will yet reveal

His blessed will as thy redeeming Lord.

And when, through matchless mercy, o'er the tomb

Thy spirit takes its flight to realms above,

Be thine the freshness of unfading bloom,

And thine the fulness of eternal love.

In her diary, Hannah Sharp writes : "We are sweetly and preciously united, and have often been favoured to feel the overshadowing of divine power."

And again, as we turn over the leaves, we find the prayer : "O, that THOU wilt be mercifully pleased to bless our union, and to enable us to serve Thee wholly, and to love Thee with all our heart." She shared in her husband's earnest longings for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ "until"—as she writes—"all nations love and serve Thee."

Their keen appreciation of the beauties of Nature was a mutual joy, whether "the shell upon the seashore, the beautiful flower of the field, the majestic ocean, or the mountain towering to the skies"—

" For the beauty of the earth,
For the beauty of the skies,
For the love which, from our birth,
Over and around us lies :
Christ, our God to THEE we raise,
This our sacrifice of praise."*

But this most happy union was to be but of short duration in this world.

Hannah Sharp died in the fourth summer after her marriage. Her husband writes of her memory being deeply graven on his heart, and adds : "Her character written there will there remain, lasting as life itself."

In her last illness she loved to talk to him of her earlier days ; of how, at the time of her mother's funeral in her childhood, the words of faithful ministers were as a message calling her to yield her heart and life to the Lord's blessed control ; and of a visit to York when, whilst walking alone in the garden at "Cherry Hill," she was comforted by a visitation of heavenly love, whilst to her heart were applied the gracious words, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Her husband says : "The sweet remem-

* F. Pierpoint.

brance of this period of her life appeared to rest upon her mind with a remarkable degree of freshness. . . . The Quarterly and Monthly Meetings were made to her humble and contrite spirit seasons of refreshment."

"I think I cannot continue long," she said one day to her husband ; "thou wilt have the two little darlings."

Of her last interview with her infant daughters, he says : "Soon after twelve she took leave of our precious lambs, and having kept up remarkably well till this trying moment, she was exceedingly overcome, and it was as much as I could well bear to carry them in, one at a time, to receive the last fond kiss and the last sweet smile from their dear mamma. She gave dear Polly one of her roses, gazed on them till they left the room, and then a flood of tears came."

She wished a Bible to be given to each of them as soon as they were old enough.

Her husband says that the deep devotional impress which at times rested on her features would never be forgotten.

In the midst of this time of sore trial he was graciously comforted. Of one night he writes : "I lay much awake, yet the prospect before me of loneliness untold was through mercy outborne by a portion of heavenly peace, which filled my heart with divine consolation, so that an ability was granted fully to acquiesce in the dealings of an all-merciful and gracious providence. . . . May the Lord keep me humble and contrite, and enable me to love Him more and serve Him with greater faithfulness."

Again he writes : "During the sombre shadows of the night it was sweet to watch her calm and placid features . . . but oh ! more sweet and blessed was the Father's love, who, through the Eternal Spirit, poured forth a tide of holy joy."

But we find, too, the "touch of nature" that "makes the whole world kin," when he tells us that, as his sweet

wife spoke calmly to him about her burial, his heart was almost too full for utterance.

"Yesterday," he writes a day or two later, "I was made to rejoice that the Lord had seen meet rather to call away my precious Hannah from me, than me from her, she being left to struggle ; and I wept as we kept silence after reading in the Psalms, being made sweetly sensible that to her belongs a part and lot in the beautiful language of David, 'The Lord is my light and my salvation.' . . . Around the death-bed of my dearest earthly treasure there has been a sweetness of feeling so great that, if ministering spirits are permitted to surround the dying couch and shed a peaceful influence around, then assuredly, ministering spirits may be here ; but, whether instrumentally through them or immediately through the Holy Spirit, the acknowledgment is due that a well-spring of consolation has been mercifully opened."

Again, he writes of the hour when "this dearest earthly treasure" passed away, as one never to be forgotten : "Though no strains of living praise were on her lips, and though no shout of victory was heard, yet a precious assurance was ours that she had gone before to the Lord Jesus."

On the day of the funeral he writes : "The stay and staff are yet in great mercy permitted me, and the acknowledgment arises, 'His tender mercies are over all His works.' Nevertheless, there is the feeling of mournfulness in store and loneliness untold."

About a week after the death of his wife, he writes of going to the room in which she had died and sitting "beside the lone spot where she had lain. Hitherto," he continues, "my weeping had been stayed. I witnessed the closing scene, took a last farewell of the remains, followed them, saw the coffin lowered, and all this, a *tearless* sorrow, yet oh ! how deep the calm. But now tears flowed apace like rain. Yet, midst the calmness of that sorrow, sweetness was mercifully mingled, and the Everlasting Arm was underneath."

At another time, he records his longing that "this present affliction may tend to promote that sanctification in which the works of righteousness are made to shine forth."

In the little MSS. volume he wrote about his wife, he copied a letter of sympathy from one of his friends, which contains the following passage: "After having been strengthened in the hour of bereavement to raise the voice of thanksgiving that thy precious partner was released from all her sufferings, canst thou ever question the Lord's power to sustain, and enable grace to triumph over natural feelings, whatever thou mayst have to pass through."

And yet Isaac Sharp might have said in the words of another good man, in reference to sore bereavement, "I find myself singularly human." The sense of loss never wholly left him, and the anniversary of his wife's death was tenderly remembered to the end of his long pilgrimage. His married life was a time of much happiness with no drawback, save the anxiety caused by his wife's increasing delicacy, which even his sanguine temperament could not lead his watchful love to overlook. But the severance had come sooner than he thought and somewhat suddenly, and although with unfeigned lips he might have said of HIM whose hand had wrought it, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him," and although marvellously upheld by that same hand, the shock was one from which he did not speedily recover.

A relative writes: "On his death-bed, desiring to ascertain whether he had any wish as to his place of interment, I asked him where his wife had been buried. He looked in my face with a peculiarly pathetic expression, and tears filled his eyes. He immediately changed the subject of conversation, and I did not again revert to the matter. Across the long gulf of years, and with the prospect of death imminent, the memory of the greatest sorrow of his life was still able to stir the fountain of tears in his soul, so full of peace, and so confidently looking forward to a

blessed and eternal re-union." After his wife's death, his sister Rebecca took charge of his household for some time. It has been well said of him that "through suffering he became the tender, ready helper of fellow sufferers by many an English fireside and in many a lonely mission-station abroad. There can be no doubt that he found comfort amid the desolation of his home (as John Bright had done the year before in another field of activity) by yielding himself with greater devotion to his Master's work."

"My father was, indeed, very kind to his motherless little ones," writes his daughter Elizabeth; "we used to go to his room in the mornings as soon as we were dressed." In reading long-cherished letters, written from the Shetland and Orkney Isles to his little girls, we can easily realise the tenderness of his sympathy with his children.

He writes of the comfort he found in thinking of the line,

"There is an eye that never sleeps"

—an eye watching over his dear child and her sister. He hopes they will not forget papa while so long away from them, and tells them of the poor boys and girls in Shetland who are almost always hungry and cold, and of how he had been making medicine for six poor children ill of whooping cough. "Remember, my dear Lizzie," he adds, "we should try to be kind to everything and everybody." He sends her some shells from a pebbly shore.

Young as she must have been when he was in Norway in 1846, he thought it worth while to write to her.

A short time before the death of his wife, Isaac Sharp was "recorded" as a minister of the Society of Friends. Little was it then foreseen that in a life lengthened out far beyond the three-score years and ten, he was to be led by his Lord into a series of religious labours almost unique in extent and duration. Forty-five times did he lay before the Friends of the Darlington district, various calls to religious service in almost every part of England and on all the continents, "concerns" to which, after serious deliberation,

the "Monthly Meeting" gave its concurrence. The certificate, embodying this concurrence, defines the nature and extent of the proposed religious service, and forms the credentials of the travelling minister. In cases of service abroad, this certificate must be confirmed by the "Quarterly Meeting," and also by the "Yearly Meeting," which is, in some sense, equivalent to a "General Assembly."

During the four years following 1842, Isaac Sharp laboured, from time to time, in Yorkshire, Northumberland, Lancashire, Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire, Devon, Cornwall, the Isles of Scilly, and the Channel Islands.

Joel Bean, an American Friend, who was often with him in later years in his journeyings in America, writes : "As we remember him here in our homes and in our meetings, so he was everywhere he went, an enlivening and inspiring presence. The aged were animated by his cheerful spirit. Little children were drawn to him in playful confidence. All ages and classes enjoyed his company. But, above all the ordinary incidents of his world-encircling mission, there stands out the memory of the 'ambassador for Christ,' the exponent of our faith in the reality of spiritual guidance and of an inspired ministry. He was among us as a messenger bearing the credentials of a Divine Commission, following a path shown by super-human direction, and was, as the Psalmist says, 'anointed with fresh oil,' for ever-varying occasions, and the needs of every new day."

Isaac Sharp realised that Christ must call, prepare, and qualify His ambassadors, and that they should preach under the influence of His spirit. He alone knows the inmost and varied needs of the congregation, and He alone can give the soul-reaching and quickening word.

CHAPTER III.

“We go in faith, our own great weakness feeling,
And needing more each day Thy grace to know,
Yet from our hearts a song of triumph pealing,
‘We rest on THEE, and in THY name we go.’”

“We do not ask to be led into the bondage of service, but into the liberty of service.”—H. V. H.

ISAAC SHARP'S earliest call to service abroad was to Norway in 1846. At the same time two other ministers of the Society of Friends residing in Cornwall, Edwin O. Tregelles and John Budge, had a like belief that the Lord had work for them to do for Him in that land. “They knew,” said Isaac Sharp, “what was in their minds, and I knew what was in mine, but they did not know what was in my mind, and I did not know what was in theirs. But we each received our separate certificates, and having so obtained them went off on that journey together.

“We found a little company there, wonderfully gathered together. That little company had been there established, strange to say, by prisoners of war at Chatham. There a few Norwegians and others got hold of one of the Friends' books—how, I do not know, and I think it was only a fragment of it—and there they saw something speaking of a spiritual religion that they had never understood among the Lutherans, and they sometimes sat down in silence to wait upon the Lord. This influenced a few of their friends, and it went on increasing and increasing till I think there were from sixteen to seventeen who so assembled for worship. Then came the end of the war and the discharge of the prisoners to their own homes.

“ When they got back to Norway, poor, unknown, looked slightly upon, because for conscience sake they dared not go and worship where the others of their families attended, they yet grew and grew in number, till in thirty years they had a nice little meeting-house. They were tender in spirit, true, dear, simple-hearted people, living to the Lord, willing to suffer for His sake.”

On his homeward voyage from Norway Isaac Sharp wrote the following details about the Friends there :

“ The entire number may be stated thus : members, forty ; their children, eighteen ; attenders, sixty-three ; their children, forty-four. Included in this number is Elias Tasted, once an English prisoner of war, who retains a lively sense of the love of God in those bygone days, when, in their assemblies on ship-board, literally the two or three together, the presence of their Lord was known to be in the midst of them. It appears the little Society may take its date about the year 1814.

“ In 1818 they were visited in Norway by William Allen and Stephen Grellet, and in 1822 by Thomas Shillitoe. The present comfortable meeting-house was erected chiefly by Elias Tasted. The contemplation of his steady Christian course, the sweetness of his spirit, his tenderness and love are deeply interesting and instructive.

“ ‘ I often think,’ he said, ‘ my time is not long, and when I heard of your intended visit I was so unwell that I thought to see you upon my bed.’ We visited his school. It has raised my admiration many times to see how much has been done by this single-eyed and simple-hearted company, whose love to all around them bears with it a precious evidence of true discipleship. The business of their Yearly Meeting was short but satisfactory. The care manifested, lest by seeking relief from their present burdens they should in any manner become involved in difficulty of conscience, was striking, and we endeavoured to encourage their honest desire patiently to suffer rather than take any step not sufficiently clear.

"One poor Friend, for a demand of two shillings for the school tax, which he could not conscientiously pay on account of the doctrines taught, had three nets taken away, valued at forty shillings. . . . There was a solemn sense that the presence of the great Head of the Church had been known amongst us, under which the meeting closed.

"At the conclusion of the meeting we took leave of one another. Great tenderness prevailed and many wept, both male and female. We parted in love, and, I trust, under a sense of prayerful pleading one for another, our own spirits being contrite, and our sympathies awakened for this deeply interesting little flock."

Isaac Sharp writes of a Sunday at Stavanger as being a day of "remarkable favour." At the morning meeting more than 200 were present, but many had to stand, and not a few to go away. "John Budge first spoke; my voice was next heard, and I trust there was that in many hearts which bore witness to the truth of the words spoken. Dear John Budge spoke a considerable time, and I trust the meeting ended well in solemn silence.

"At 2.30 p.m., the meeting-house was still more crowded. Dear Edwin O. Tregelles spoke as one commissioned by his divine Master, of Elijah and the 'still, small voice,' salvation by Jesus Christ, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire. At the close of the meeting, the members and attenders were requested to stop, and nearly eighty remained; E. O. Tregelles and John Budge addressing them, the former very beautifully and the latter in much brokenness of spirit, in which before its close the whole meeting seemed to partake. My lot appeared to be in reverent thanksgiving to bend the knee and supplicate for a blessing on those assembled. I do not remember so prevalent a tenderness in any meeting before. It was now nearly 5 p.m., and, after a time of silence, we stood at the door to shake hands and say farewell. Very many wept, and it was touching to see some of these sons of the North

wiping away the tear drops as they flowed, the tenderness of their spirits strikingly contrasting with their athletic frames. . . . Endre Dahl, who acted as our interpreter, greatly to our comfort and satisfaction, kindly gave up his time to accompany us to Bergen and Christiania. It is about seven years since he joined the Society, and more than twelve months since he first spoke as a minister, much to the comfort of his friends. He was more than once engaged in the exercise of his gift while we were present to the melting of many hearts.

"The day following the one on which our meeting was held at Bergen not fewer than fifty individuals called to ask for tracts. In passing from Stavanger to Bergen—which voyage of more than 100 miles, among countless islands and a rocky shore, was performed in an open boat—we had a crew of those who profess with Friends. Their consideration for our comfort and their satisfactory deportment were very acceptable. The meetings which were appointed between these two places were chiefly among a simple-hearted people, some of whom had conscientiously withdrawn from the public worship.

"Helge Eriksen, of Hagane, not yet thirty, has for most of seven years travelled as a religious duty, enduring all the fatigue and the hardships attendant on the rigour of the climate, supporting himself by making watch-guards as he journeyed along. He has five times walked a distance of 140 miles to visit those whom he believed to be in a seeking and tender state, and to whom his mind had been attracted.

"The Friends' faithful maintenance, amidst surrounding difficulties, of the principles they have professed, the tenderness of their spirits, and their daily walk before God are deeply interesting and instructive."

Isaac Sharp remained on the Continent for a short time after parting from his beloved companions, and on his homeward voyage wrote as follows to John Budge: "My mind was under deep exercise in reference to the King of

Norway and Sweden before leaving London, but I felt it was one of those things which must be pondered in the heart. After we parted, I watched the paddle-wheels from the shores of Copenhagen till the vessel could be seen no more. The same evening I proceeded to Elsinore. . . . The King was at Helsingborg. The races were held on the day of my arrival. Carriages were pouring in from all quarters. The place was very full, and I remained quietly in my temporary home. In a weak state of health, alone hour after hour, without one single earthly counsellor, under a burden, the issue of which was yet unseen, my feelings were almost overwhelming. But, 'Whoever trusted in the Lord and was confounded?'

"The way opened to my wondering view, and after three days' trial of faith, the Baron Manderstrom kindly called at the hotel to conduct me to the King's apartments. The interview was relieving. . . . At parting, the King extended his hand and pronounced the word, 'Farewell.'"

During the succeeding sixteen years, Isaac Sharp was often engaged in religious service, especially in the North of England, besides having some meetings in Scotland, and, in company with the late Barnard Dickenson, paying two visits to the Orkney and Shetland Isles.

In the year 1850 he removed to Middlesbrough, which, after the discovery of iron ore in the Cleveland Hills, became an important iron manufacturing centre. He filled the responsible post of manager to the estate, and the rapid development of the place made it needful for him to live on the spot.

As year after year passed by, he found that thoughts of Iceland were almost constantly occupying his heart and mind. If when in a merchant's office or a schoolroom he saw a map of Europe, his eye turned instinctively to that island of the North-West, whither the constraining love of Christ was calling him to go. And yet the difficulties in finding any opening for religious work there seemed as if

they must prove insurmountable, for no creed but the Lutheran was allowed in Iceland. Nevertheless, in 1861, he felt it to be his duty to ask for a certificate for Gospel service there.

As soon as he had received the credentials of the Society of Friends for this labour of love, the late well-known Josiah Forster said to him, "Let us go round by the Bible Society's house." When they reached it they found the foreign committee was sitting. This committee was seeking communication with the Bishop of Iceland relative to a new edition of the Bible, and the chairman said, in reply to a question from Josiah Forster, that the Bishop had sent no answer to the letter which had been sent to him.

"Here is Isaac Sharp going to Iceland," said Josiah Forster.

"Why not give him a letter to the Bishop, to make some enquiry and report back to us," was the chairman's response.

Thus he was informally appointed an agent of the Bible Society, and was therefore well received by the Lutheran Bishop. But we need not say there was to be no concealment of the nature of the visit. He bade the interpreter read to the Bishop his certificate for religious service in Iceland, as a minister of the Society of Friends. Meanwhile he carefully watched the expression of the Bishop's face with the satisfactory result of seeing no scowl there, and that the slight movements of his head were those of nodding rather than shaking. At the conclusion of the reading the Bishop smiled but did not speak, and under these circumstances Isaac Sharp felt that it was fair to take it for granted that silence gave consent.

On the following Sunday he had an opportunity for addressing more than 500 people, many of whom seemed to drink in the Gospel truths they heard. So crowded was the room that very few could sit. When the meeting was over sundry comments were made, such as :

"This is what we want."

"We never heard the like before."

"This is quite new."

"Oh ! that you could speak to the people in Icelandic !"

"Precious and deep," says Isaac Sharp, "was the calm upon our spirits, and in the brightness of the northern clime it was nearly twelve before we were inclined to retire for the night." There was no let nor hindrance now, and before he left the town ten letters were given him of introduction to deans and others, who were urged to help him forward.

His companion and interpreter was Asbjorn Kloster of Stavanger, a beloved fellow-labourer. Meetings were held in a variety of places. Strange to say, except that the Lord opened the way, one of the meetings was for the members of the Icelandic Parliament. Even the little island of Grimsey, lying very near or within the Arctic Circle was visited. Isaac Sharp writes : "To go there was a trial of faith. The inhabitants were few in number. A boat's crew sent from thence to the mainland in the spring for provisions, was, owing to stress of weather, detained more than two months before it could return. But finding no peace except in yielding to duty, a Norwegian vessel then lying in the harbour was engaged, and after a tedious passage we reached the island in safety. In addition to a meeting held with the inhabitants, they were visited from house to house, for which the poor people appeared grateful, and a sense of sweet peace was permitted to rest on the retrospect."

A day or two later Holar was visited, a place deeply interesting in the annals of Iceland, as the spot where, in 1584, the first edition of the entire Bible in the Icelandic language was printed by Bishop Gudbrand.

"Our progress," says Isaac Sharp, "in this journey was attended by many exercises of faith and patience ; but, amidst all, the breathing of earnest prayer for Divine help and guidance, in condescending mercy did not ascend in vain,

and we were preciously enabled to hold on our way trusting in the Lord. The rivers of the south of Iceland are very formidable, and liable to be suddenly swollen. The fording of the rapids is not free from danger, but in the periods of greatest difficulty there was a sense of Divine support, and a calming influence amidst the roar of the mighty waters.

"My mind was for many days under great exercise, in reference to a visit to the Westman Islands, places, except in the height of summer, of difficult approach; but the attempt was made, and on the following day a meeting was held in the Court-house, greatly disturbed by several men who were noisy from drink. Others were quiet and attentive, including the priest and several of the principal inhabitants. Under the pressure of remaining service to be accomplished on the mainland, we engaged a boat and crew and set sail from the Westmans; but on nearing the Icelandic shore, the foaming waves of the Atlantic, breaking with continuous roar on the Rangarsander rendered it impossible to land, and we were compelled to put back again. Another meeting was held in the Court-house; 250 persons assembled, being one half of the entire population. The greatest order prevailed, and I trust it may be said the meeting was graciously owned by the great Head of the Church."

The boisterous wind and heavy sea still made it impracticable for the Friends and their interpreter to leave the Westmans on the two following days. "Stormy wind fulfilling His word" it certainly was. From Isaac Sharp's heart the prayer went up, "Be pleased, O Lord, to lead us forth from this place in peace." He was not so anxious to get away as he was to do all his Lord's bidding there. The service to which he now felt called was to pay a few religious visits from house to house. Whilst faith and patience were given him, "nature," he says, "shrank exceedingly." The first call was on a merchant and his wife, who gave the ministers a pleasant welcome.

"I was glad that you were not able to get away," the merchant said, "because of the second meeting you held."

"Our next call was on another merchant and a widow who keeps house for him. We were thanked by both for the visit, tears of tenderness of heart filled the eyes of the widow. Our next visit was to the priest, and greatly dreaded. The truth was spoken in love and was, I believe, in the same spirit received. The priest's wife appeared very tender and shed many tears, and they both took leave of us cordially." These and other visits occupied nearly five hours. Meanwhile, the wind went down and the waves became more calm, and on the following morning the mainland was reached in safety. But on the mainland, too, the hardships were not light nor the hazards trifling.

The travel was on horse-back, with pack-horses for baggage. Sometimes two days would pass by without a house being seen. The sleeping places were of varied kinds, a barn, a church, a tent, when rest was welcome after, it might be, thirteen hours in the saddle without halting. Sometimes there was no means of drying wet clothes, and the food was not always sufficient. Again, there were morasses to pass over; rivers, too, as we have seen, to be forded, though not free from quicksands and sudden floods.

Great kindness was shown to the Friends in reference to two meetings by the respective priests of Teigr and Bredabolstadar; the former invited his flock to assemble two hours before the usual time, and the latter arranged that they should meet the people of his parish at the conclusion of the usual evening service in his church. Whilst Isaac Sharp was deeply exercised before these meetings were held, he found the Lord very near to help and bless in the service.

Two nights were spent at the house of another priest near the foot of Mount Hecla. From place to place meetings were held until Reykjavik, the capital, was

reached on the 17th of September, about three months after the travellers had landed there. On the following morning, the young son of Dr. Peterson, a Professor of Theology, placed a sealed packet in Isaac Sharp's hands, the enclosure of which was addressed in duplicate to Asbjorn Kloster and himself :

" You are, most honoured gentlemen, come hither a long way to preach the Word of God. . . . And on your journeys everywhere, where it has been possible, you have spoken the word of admonition and consolation to the brethren, and tried to awaken and enliven the fear of God and a Christian life of faith ; and all your conduct has shown that this your undertaking is not occasioned by ambition nor vanity, but from fervent love to mankind, from the true, Christian brother love, and a living desire to lead others to the kingdom of God. Therefore, we may trust with full security that the Lord, who gives the growth, will graciously bless these your endeavours, and with His Spirit fertilize that which you in this manner have sown and watered ; that He will perfect the good work which you, with His help, have begun, that it may become to the praise of His holy name and for the salvation of men. Your undertaking is so beautiful and the aim so Christian, that we, who write our names under this letter, consider it our duty to give you our thankfulness and esteem, not only in our own name, but also in the name of all our countrymen that you have spoken to. . . . The Lord be with you in the name of Jesus Christ.

" Reykjavik,

" 11th September, 1861.

" TH. JONASSON, Governor.

" H. G. THORDASSON, Bishop.

" O. PAALSON, Dean and Priest.

" J. HJALTALIN, Physician.

" DR. PETERSON, Professor of Theology."

In all fifty names.

A few days were still left before the probable arrival of the steamer which would bear the travellers home. For many weeks Isaac Sharp's thoughts had turned to Utskauler and some other places on the coast. He now learnt that on the following Sunday a large number of people would assemble there from many miles round, on the occasion of the opening of a new church. He at first feared that the length of the ceremony might prevent his companion and himself from having a suitable opportunity for expressing what the Lord might lay on their hearts. But the priest, a near relative of the Bishop, most kindly made way for the Friends, who were thus able to meet with a deeply attentive congregation of 500 people, probably a larger number than they could otherwise have met with in a journey of many days or weeks.

In reference to the opening of the church, the nature of true worship was freely spoken of: "That it is not enough to assemble outwardly at one time, and in one place. 'God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.' Neither will the offering of prayer avail unless it be the utterance of the heart."

Truly, the Friends found themselves in a unique position that day, but surely it was by the will of God.

At the close of the meeting the priest publicly acknowledged the visit of the Friends in the name of the whole congregation. Asbjorn Kloster afterwards said to Isaac Sharp, "We have had many formidable occasions, and to-day was not the least."

About sixty meetings were held in Iceland.

The homeward voyage from Iceland was a very stormy one. Isaac Sharp writes that one night during the danger experienced in a violent gale, he realised the truth of the words, "The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak." He adds, "It was a season of solemn review. Myself and my children, time past and present, and the possible future, or suspension of the future, were vividly before me; the littleness of earth

and its belongings, and the need of knowing my own will to be swallowed up in the Divine will was present with me. A precious watchword was given me : ' Be still and know that I am God ; I will be exalted among the heathen ; I will be exalted in the earth.' In condescending mercy it was permitted me, humbly and confidently, to cast my all upon the Lord for time and for eternity. The day drew on, and the force gradually abated both of wind and wave."

He would describe Iceland as being a land of negatives. " No dissent—the religion is Lutheran, no army, no navy, no prisons, no roads, no inns, no carriages, no trees, no poultry, no snakes." When writing of two days travel without seeing a single house, he adds : " Our road was over trackless wastes of rock and sand, here and there charmingly relieved by the wild flowers of Iceland, lovely to look upon, and strikingly calling to remembrance the late William Wilberforce who spoke of floral beauty as ' the smile of Providence.' "

Once more with his beloved family and friends, he writes of a " precious sense " being granted that over all the frailty and shortcoming of the last four months, unmerited love and mercy have been sweetly spread. Peace with God through Jesus Christ has been, at times rejoicingly, the clothing of my spirit, with some renewed ability confidently to trust in the goodness and guidance of the Great Head of the Church, and the unfolding of heavenly counsel for any portion of service, and the order of that service which may yet remain."

With simple faith he might have used Charles Wesley's words :

" Saviour to Thee my soul looks up,
My present Saviour Thou ! "

CHAPTER IV.

“Far and wide, though all unknowing,
Pants for THEE, each mortal breast;
Human tears for THEE are flowing,
Human hearts in THEE would rest.
Thirsting as for dews of even,
As the new-mown grass for rain,
THEE they seek, as God of Heaven,
THEE, as man for sinners slain.”

A. C. Coxe.

THREE months in the spring and early summer of 1862, were spent by Isaac Sharp in a visit to the Faroe Islands, Asbjorn Kloster being again his companion in service.

On the morning of the 23rd of April, the two Friends landed at Thorshaven, the capital of the islands, which has a population of about eight hundred. As the place did not possess an inn, they found accommodation at the house of one of the factors. Isaac Sharp writes: “It now became a matter of serious deliberation how to proceed for the best, weather, wind and wave often setting arrangements aside, however carefully made. The rapid flow of the ocean currents between one island and another had also to be kept in view. Sudden squalls often arise with great rapidity, and the gusts from the mountains render sailing at times both difficult and dangerous.”

Many of the remote districts of these islands, therefore, only receive a pastoral visit from the appointed minister at intervals varying from three to six times a year. Meanwhile,

according to the rules of the Lutheran Church, the portion for the day is read to those who assemble in the kirk in each parish on Sundays, and on some other occasions.

To quote again from Isaac Sharp : "Great is the difficulty and distress to which these islanders are constantly exposed in the event of sudden illness or accident, there being at present but one doctor for seventeen islands, occupying a space of nearly sixty miles from north to south, and forty from east to west." His own health suffered a good deal from sleeping in very damp beds, a more serious matter than being often wet and weary when going from island to island in open boats, or when climbing the fells. Whilst we must not follow him in his service from place to place, his account of his visit to the island of Myggenes, the most westerly of the group, must be recorded.

"With a crew of ten we left Sorvaag in an open boat soon after 6 a.m. As appears usual when entering on a hazardous enterprise, the boatmen sang a hymn while yet in the still water of the bay."

This may remind us of the Breton fisherman's prayer :

"Keep me, my God ;

My boat is so small, and the ocean is so wide."

"The morning," continues Isaac Sharp, "was fine, but on nearing the island it was found impracticable to land at the usual place owing to the heavy breakers on the rocky shore. Our boatmen therefore steered for the eastern end of the island and entered a little cove under shelter of a few projecting rocks, from whence our ascent began. After climbing up some forty or fifty feet, a sloping ledge of rock, barely wide enough for one at a time, brought us to the foot of an almost perpendicular ascent where a chain hanging loosely against the rock but secured at the top and bottom presented the only means of access to the heights above.

"Two of the boat's crew, accustomed as fowlers to climb, first ascended, carrying one end of a rope, and my turn having come, the other end by a secure knot well

tested was fastened round my waist. In this manner the ascent of some fifty or sixty feet was made by climbing up the chain, aided by the men above, who held the rope. The mountain slope on reaching the top was for a considerable distance steeper than the roof of an ordinary house. My valued companion and myself were mercifully preserved from fear during the ascent, and felt no giddiness, but the strain on the muscles was great and exhausting. For nearly an hour we continued to ascend the ridges of the fell, in some places rocky and steep, and veiled as the mists of the mountains came sweeping by.

"On nearing the hamlet we met seven men on their way to the rocky ledges to seek for sea birds and for eggs, a dangerous undertaking much resorted to in some of the islands of Faroe. The object of our visit was explained to them. They told us it was too far for them to go back to the hamlet, their arrangements for the fowling having been made, but they were willing to go with us a little space to the sheltering brow of a hill. This opportunity was embraced to tell them that although in their employment they were accustomed to dangers which at any moment might end their earthly course, there is a death more terrible far than the death of the body, and that it is a bounden duty to seek a preparation for the life to come. The men were respectful and listened attentively ; soon we parted company and journeyed on, they in one direction, we in another.

"Between 11 and 12 we reached the hamlet, but the Kirkevegr, the principal man of the place, told us plainly there had been service in the kirk that morning already and he did not care for any more. If the people wished to attend our meeting they might, though not at his house, but we were welcome to come in and rest. We entered, and soon found the wife more favourably disposed towards us. By degrees her husband softened, and not only prepared a room for the meeting, but gave notice to his neighbours ; and between 12 and 1 o'clock nearly fifty persons

assembled, among whom my companion had an open time, and subsequently interpreted for me. It was a good meeting, and the Kirkevegr afterwards warmly and very cordially acknowledged the visit.

"Some sea birds were boiled for our dinner, which, with potatoes, rye bread, and butter, a cup of coffee, and a few biscuits, furnished a refreshing meal. The waves were still too high to allow of our departure by the usual landing, so taking leave of the Kirkevegr and his family we set off on foot over the mountains, conscious in passing along of the peril which awaited us on reaching the chain.

"The descent, though not easy, was accomplished in safety. We were soon once more in the boat, and after a tossing on the tidal waves, which rose and fell with a majestic sweep, reached Sorvaag about 8 p.m., with a peaceful sense on our spirits of the providential care mercifully extended to us in the time of need. Truly, the promise was again fulfilled, 'As thy days, so shall thy strength be.'"

During his varied religious engagements in these islands, which caused much exercise of soul, Isaac Sharp found the help graciously given him was equal to the need, and was crowned by the peace of God. But at times he found it good to remember the lines,

"Where thou canst not draw the veil,
Let thy faith and trust prevail."

In one place where there seemed to be the greatest indifference, some, with apparent sincerity, acknowledged the visit with thanks. After one evening meeting an elderly man said :

"I have been here sixty-four years and never heard the like in this kirk before. God grant His blessing may rest upon it."

In another place one of the Lutheran office bearers, who had been cold and distant before the meeting was held, said afterwards :

"I have seen and felt the vanity of an empty profession, and acknowledge the goodness of God in sending His messengers to bear witness to the truth."

Most of the meetings were held in the "Rogstue," the largest room in the house, having an earthen floor, with benches or boxes on two or three sides of it. But occasionally the Friends were asked to make use of the kirk. This was the case at Videroe. When the Friends left Videroe, the pastor went down to the water's edge with them, his wife and little children remaining on the heights above, after a very cordial leave-taking.

"I shall never forget your visit," said the pastor, "and shall often remind my congregation of it. May God bless you wherever you go, and lift upon you the light of His countenance."

"Throughout the entire journey," writes Isaac Sharp, "we have met with great openness and but little opposition, although the doctrine of a spiritual life and walk appears new to many. To outward baptism and the bread and wine they cling exceedingly, and it is greatly to be feared many rest therein, not seeing sufficiently beyond. There is a deficiency of the Holy Scriptures in Faroe, especially as regards the Old Testament. The New Testament is to be found in most places, but sermon books and prayer books bear evidence of being much more read. A form of religion is strictly observed, but, in too many instances, without a corresponding life and power. Education is much neglected except at Thorshaven. Strong drink has many votaries. In the course of this engagement fifty-nine meetings have been held, the attendance at which has rather exceeded one-third of the whole population of Faroe, computed at 8,000."

In the following year, 1863, Isaac Sharp paid a second visit to Iceland. He met with much hospitality of a primitive kind which he was very careful not to over-tax.

One day whilst, by the help of his interpreter, he was heartily thanking a good-wife, he managed, when shaking

hands with her, to place a large silver coin on her palm. He says : " As soon as she felt the dollar she realised all that it meant. It was like an electric shock ! Up she jumped, put her arms around my neck, and gave me such a kissing ! "

During this stay in Iceland he visited the hamlet of Silfra Stothar and desired to have a meeting with its inhabitants. He found, however, that most of them were away in the fields busy at hay-making. When they came back they said they should like a meeting if it could be held early on the following morning. Isaac Sharp and his companion had to spend the intervening night in a church. Before the meeting began he was told that a man half-mad with drink was outside the church, holding an open knife and boasting how far he could thrust it into anyone if he wished to do so. During the service this man entered the church muttering in an ominous manner. Isaac Sharp spoke to him, quietly asking him to be so kind as to remember for what purpose the people had come together. The man took out his knife and opened it. No wonder that Isaac Sharp says, " It was rather a critical time ; my friend was interpreting for me, and it was very remarkable that, without any reference to the intruder, I just thought, ' Who shall harm you if ye be followers of that which is good ? ' " Then the man shut up his knife and put it into his pocket again. He afterwards said, " I thought they had been Pagans, but they are all good Christians. If they had been Pagans, I would have run my knife into them. " When Isaac Sharp asked the interpreter what this poor mad drunkard had been muttering in the church, he was told that it was, strange to say, a fragment of an old Icelandic hymn :

" Our Heavenly Father's eye, watchful and ever clear,
Beholds His children loved, and marks each falling tear ;
Support they never lack, nor need they ever fear. "

Another Icelandic story he would tell with a good deal of his wonted humour. From experience gained in his first

visit it was quite plain that his young relative, Henry Richardson, and himself should take bedding materials with them. One night they were to lodge at a house rather above the style of dwelling they usually met with. They were kindly welcomed, and, after supper, were shown into the room which was to serve them for the night. Great curiosity was manifested by a considerable number of people who had assembled in the house, as the travellers began to unpack their air beds and pillows, and to inflate them with the bellows. These preliminaries completed, the interested spectators gave no indication that the strangers would be left to complete the process of retiring in their accustomed privacy. None offered to leave, and, after a time, Isaac Sharp, divesting himself of his coat and boots, lay down to rest. His young companion, however, had no idea of contributing to the entertainment of the visitors, but waited up until one by one the Icelanders disappeared. He then leisurely proceeded in preparing for his night's repose.

In the meanwhile Isaac Sharp, being in a horizontal position, could see—what his young friend could not—that in the ceiling of the room was a large square hole, at which one after another, till the whole space was filled, appeared a number of heads owned by the recent onlookers. Can we not imagine the chagrin of the young Englishman when, as he at last lay down, he became fully aware that his plans had been baffled after all?

But what are such stories without the inimitable raconteur? During one of these northern missions we find him writing in 1861: "I am sometimes like a child, and sometimes like a grave old man, and sometimes sorrowful because I am not like myself."

Isaac Sharp writes: "The occupation of the people during the summer, when the daylight is continuous, is very close. No grain being grown, hay is the only crop for harvesting, and it occupies the Icelander early and late. On it depends alike his own life and that of his cattle. . . . The conviction settled on my mind with deep thoughtfulness

that a part of my duty, and perhaps not a small part in this land, would be, as far as practicable, by personal invitation or otherwise, to secure the attendance of the Icelandic pastors at the meetings which might be held. This, to a considerable extent, was accomplished.

"From place to place the attention of the people was lovingly called to the testimony of Holy Scripture without, and to the teaching of the Holy Spirit within ; to the outward sacrifice made in unfathomable love for the sins of all men by Jesus Christ, and to the inward revelation of His power ; that, notwithstanding an outward profession, however fair, if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of His, true religion being an inward work. . . . I believe that it may be said that, both in public and private, words were put into my mind with power to utter them ; and that, on a peaceful retrospect, the Lord hath had the praise."

The pastors were most kind and hospitable to the Friends, and took great pains to gather the people together. "The ready willingness," says Isaac Sharp, "by night or day, to bid us welcome—our arrival being sometimes very late—has often excited both surprise and gratitude, not at times without a feeling of thankfulness in the belief that the way was prepared for us, from place to place, in the hearts and minds of the people." He believed that the inhabitants of Iceland would "largely deepen in religious experience, did they sufficiently realise that in vital Christianity there is more inwardly to feel than outwardly to do ; nevertheless their tenderness and tears, in some instances, have left no doubt of their susceptibility to religious impressions or of the loving-kindness of the Lord toward them, whose contriting power has been known as a very precious bond of union, especially in the domestic circle."

The meetings were usually held in the kirk, and sometimes, before the congregation dispersed, the pastor would thankfully acknowledge the visit.

"I thank you," said one of the pastors, "for the words you have spoken to this congregation, and desire that they may be stirred up to diligence in witnessing your care for them, and the cost and toil in its accomplishment. May the Lord, who is able by His power in your hours of weakness to strengthen you and bless you, be with you in your work, and bring you home in peace."

There were many evidences of God's protecting care, as the Friends went over the lava fields, travelled through the wilderness, crossed mountain passes, and forded broad and rapid rivers. In reference to some of the dangerous rivers, which it took half-an-hour to pass over, Isaac Sharp says: "I saw the sand banks which the recent floods had made, and wondered as I saw; for the waters had strikingly abated, and no contrivance of our own could have brought us so favourably through. Again and again I could acknowledge, surely this is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in my eyes.

"For the passage of the Yokulsa, regarded by some as the most formidable of the Icelandic waters, two guides were engaged, father and son, who, side by side, in deep water, were seeking a passage. The day had been warm, and the flow had rapidly increased. We were many miles removed, and that by a difficult road, from the nearest grass for the horses, or food and shelter for ourselves and the men. Aware of our critical position, secret earnest prayer arose to the Almighty that He would be pleased to show the guides the way, and enable us to follow them safely. Speedily they turned in another direction, tried one place more, and failing, came to the shore, informing us we could not cross except at too great a risk of the lives of all. 'But,' they added, 'we will try the Yokul.' A way was sought and found, but not through the roaring river. The prayer was heard and answered. Across the ice mountain, from under which the waters flow, our passage lay. Sometimes down the slopes steep and slippery, and sometimes traversing the fissures, men and horses, by slow

degrees, passed on in safety to the other side. The interpreter said : ' This is undoubtedly the most remarkable day of our travel. ' ”

For some nine days Isaac Sharp was laid aside by illness. This was in August, but snow lay on the ground, and the storm was heavy. There was no fire except in the kitchen, to which he had no access. He writes :

“ Through Divine favour, though considerably prostrated, there was in these days of tarriance a remarkable freedom from anxiety. ”

At Reykjavik he asked for a meeting with the office bearers and teachers of the College. “ The invitation, ” he says, “ included some of the most learned men in Iceland, possessing endowments which made me feel very little amongst them. ” He addressed them, he says, under a feeling of deep religious exercise, on the responsibility resting on those on whom devolved the important duties connected with the training of the young, on our accountability to the Almighty for the influence we individually possess, and for its right employment as respects its bearing on the present life and on the life to come. . . . Simply and cordially many acknowledgments were made of this token of Christian love.

“ There rests on my mind a humbling sense of Divine goodness, and of the power of the Holy Spirit, under the quickening influence of which the message of a Saviour's love, given me to bear in this land, has found an entrance, I venture to believe, in the hearts of not a few whom the Lord is seeking to draw into a closer walk and fellowship with Him. For His great mercy and protecting care, and for the blessed privilege of being an instrument, however feeble, in His hand for good, in deep unworthiness my soul is bowed in reverence before Him, while precious partaking of His love and peace. ”

CHAPTER V.

“ And whilst we do THY blessed will,
We bear our heaven about us still.”

C. Wesley.

DURING Isaac Sharp's visits to Iceland and the Faroe Isles, and after his return home, he often believed that the Lord had further service for him in the far north, the region of “ eternal frost.” But we will leave him to tell the story in his own words :

“ Greenland was often in remembrance with an abiding sense of religious duty, and a strong attraction in gospel love towards those who have their dwelling on its ice-bound shores—especially in and around the Moravian Mission stations. My mind was often under deep exercise. The call was clear and abiding, yet the sense of the trials inseparable from the engagement sometimes pressed with almost overpowering weight. But when the gracious help of the Holy Spirit, and a settled trust that the Great Head of the Church had appointed the service were granted ; and when, through the loving-kindness of the Lord, everything outward was brought into stillness before Him, a calm, precious and deep, succeeded, and my soul was enabled to magnify the Lord, and my spirit to rejoice in God my Saviour.

“ When the time to enter on the engagement appeared to have fully come, the gracious words of encouragement arose in my heart with freshness and strength, ‘ Behold I have set before thee an open door.’ Greatly to my comfort, as the time of departure drew near, my dear friend,

Harrison Penney, of Darlington, felt constrained, under a sense of religious duty, to surrender himself as companion in the engagement."

In a letter to his daughters, written during the voyage to New Herrnhut in May, 1864, Isaac Sharp says in reference to a fine panorama of ice, "The ocean was flecked in a wonderful manner by detached portions of ice, in size varying from a locomotive to a perambulator. Huge bergs, some near to us and some on the distant horizon, also claimed our wondering view. One was very near to us and very beautiful, so varied in its form and shade; in one part white as driven snow and apparently as smooth, in another, the abrupt perpendicular gave evidence of the glacier from which it had been detached. Toward the top was a slanting slab-like table of *blue* ice, finely contrasting with the dark water of the ocean and intervening crest of white; while below, the water-worn crags, as the sea dashed over them, formed recesses for the cascades which followed in quick succession. In order to keep clear of the ice it became necessary to alter the vessel's course. . . . At 10 p.m. it is quite light enough to see to read, nor is there indeed any real darkness two hours later. Our recent slow progress extorts the wish from Harrison Penney that the *Constance* had a screw-propeller. Paul Hansen (placid Brother Paul) meanwhile thinks that on long voyages it is well to have 'a bag of patience.' The wind continues contrary, but we have no room to complain—far otherwise. When, in 1859, Ernest Rentril visited Greenland, although in summer, after having seen the land on a bright, calm day, a sudden gale arose and carried them out to sea, probationers for other six days ere they landed at Goodhope. On the 28th, Charles Spindler was early on deck and came down to my cabin berth, exclaiming with energy, 'I have seen Greenland, and it is white with snow.' And so it was, but the wind was contrary, and we sailed to and fro, unable to approach, although within about six hours of our haven if wind and weather permitted."

The next day was a Sunday and the thirty-ninth day at sea. It was calm and still, and it was arranged that at noon there should be a meeting with the seamen. Isaac Sharp says : " The coast of Greenland was clearly visible to the naked eye, peaked and pinnacled in gloomy grandeur, on the margin of a bay stretching as far as the eye could reach. On the left was a sun-lit portion, bright in its icy beauty, strikingly contrasting with the sober grey of the remaining outline under shadow. Suddenly the wind rose and with it the waves. Before twelve it blew a gale, and the seamen were summoned out of their warm berths to climb the rigging and reef the sails ; such is the experience of a seafaring life, calling to mind the tender sympathy awakened in the bosom of the tender John Woolman for those who toil for their daily bread on the mighty deep. . . . We have often remarked on the captain's uniform kindness, and the willingness of the men at their work ; and often, too, have we had occasion to feel the loving-kindness of the Lord and His watchful providence from day to day."

It was not until the early morning of the 1st of June that the *Constance* was moored in a sunny little cove wondrously land-locked. " Dr. Rink and his wife," continues Isaac Sharp, " came on board before three in the morning, thirsting for European tidings, and unable to sleep for two nights after hearing the ship had been seen near the coast. About 10 a.m. we landed at the Moravian Mission Station at New Herrnhut on the forty-second day of our voyage, a good average passage without any serious storm.

" We were received with much kindness. My certificate was read, also a kind letter of introduction from a bishop of the Moravian Church, addressed to the ' Brethren in Greenland.' The early morning had been marked by what felt like a preparatory spiritual baptism for the work about to be entered upon ; tenderness of spirit and tears succeeded.

"We assembled with the congregation in their usual place of worship. It was a time of deep interest. They were about to follow to the burial the remains of one who had exhorted the congregation not long before, and had passed away after a short illness. Opportunity was readily afforded for my speaking to the people what lay on my heart for expression. Paul Hansen interpreted the English into German, which C. G. Herbrick rendered into Greenlandic. In being thus for the first time present with a Greenland congregation, I felt greatly contrited. In reference to the severance which death had made, I reminded them of that blessed union which survives the wreck of time, and the duty of seeking after it from day to day.

"In respect to some of these descendants of a heathen race whom God, who is no respecter of persons, is, I believe, drawing near unto Himself through Jesus, I felt there was a teaching lesson to my own mind in the powerful application of the words addressed to Peter, 'What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.' As is customary in that land, owing to the scarcity of wood, seal skins sewed together supplied the place of a coffin. A simple bier, with a white sheet thrown over, was borne shoulder height; and between two little bays, where the rocks rise upward from the sea, was deposited in its narrow bed 'all that the grave could claim.' Having thus mingled with the mourners, we passed away and could not but feel it a touching and instructive scene. Over each grave is raised a little mound of stones and moss and sod."

When Sunday came, the travellers went on board the *Constance*, the Danish Government vessel in which they had sailed, to hold a meeting, which Isaac Sharp thus describes: "The morning was fine, and the men assembled on the deck of the vessel, which lay at anchor in a sheltered cove; the captain, with the first and second mates, were also there. The solid bearing of the hardy seamen, their folded hands and quiet demeanour, evinced their interest in the

object of our coming together ; nor were they, I believe, insensible to the pleadings in prayer on their behalf, uttered in their own language by Paul Hansen in the fulness of his heart. After a short silence the men took their leave of us respectfully, our interpreter hastened to the morning gathering of the Moravians at New Herrnhut, while Harrison Penney and myself, under shelter of the lichen-covered rocks, held our little meeting together, and could thankfully believe that the Lord was near to own and bless us.

“ In the afternoon a deeply interesting meeting was held with the Mission family of New Herrnhut, increased also by the arrival from Umanak of I. J. Schneider and his wife. C. G. Herbrick, the senior missionary, has been for more than thirty years a labourer in Greenland. He and his wife have had to part with their dear children, who have been sent to Christiansfeldt for education. A precious covering of Divine love was graciously spread over us. My heart was much tendered in being with and feeling for them ; and under the power of the Lord, words spoken in love were, I believe, received in the love in which they were offered.”

In a letter which Mr. Schneider wrote to Isaac Sharp on his return to Umanak he says, “ I send you the kind remembrance of myself and family, who with one heart wish you the Lord’s blessing and His assistance in your journeying. We deeply regret not to see you at our place, but feel very thankful, my dear friends, for having seen you at New Herrnhut. We feel it a blessing and encouragement, and renewing of our strength, to see and feel how deeply the Friends in England share with us in our Mission labour. *Bear our best thanks to them.* We commend ourselves and our Greenlanders to your remembrance and your prayers. Your visit will never be forgotten. May our hearts be united in love to each other and to our dear Saviour, till we, through His grace, may be with Him for ever.”

But to resume Isaac Sharp’s narrative. “ The following morning we rose at four and left for Lichtenfels, one of the

Moravian settlements, eighty miles distant. We were provided with a skin boat and seven female rowers, with a man to steer. The water-line outside the frail bark could be distinctly seen within, the transparency of the skin sufficing also for its ready transmission of the ocean tint of green. Toward evening the fog became so dense as to obscure the land. For a time our position amongst the icebergs was one of thoughtfulness, but a sheltered resting-place for the night was at length discovered on a low-lying, uninhabited island, where our tent was set up ; on tightening the ropes of which about eleven o'clock at night they were found to be covered with ice."

After a little work by the way, Lichtenfels was reached. "Here," says Isaac Sharp, "an opportunity presented for entering into near sympathy with our friends whilst witnessing some of the trials and privations incident to missionary life ; nor have I often felt more deeply the privilege of mingling sighs with those whose situation was calculated to draw them forth."

But the sympathy was, in a spiritual sense, a very practical one, and calculated to cheer the faithful missionaries and uphold their hands. Of his religious interview with the mission family, he says : "I believe we were made sensible of the nearness of heavenly good, to the tendering of our hearts before the Lord. The severance and isolation of Greenland Mission life is great. A sense of it was much on my mind, with a glimpse of the glory beyond to those who endure, and ability was granted for utterance among them in the power of a Saviour's love. After the interview J. W. Wellner said :

" ' We feel and own what has been expressed, and desire it may be fulfilled. Our light afflictions which are but for a moment, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed. Our little ones we give up to the Lord, feeling that Christ hath died for them, and that He is able still to bless and keep us, although there are many things other than we can desire. We labour in the precious

feeling that from among the Greenlanders, God is gathering immortal souls to Himself in glory. Forget us not in your prayers before the Lord for we are united in spirit in Him."

Once when Isaac Sharp was addressing the congregation at New Herrnhut, when a number of the young were present, the burden of his message was conveyed in the words: "Be steadfast in your love to Christ and follow Him. God hath sent forth the spirit of His Son into our hearts, and for this we are accountable to Him. Time was when Greenlanders had never heard the name of Jesus. In the love and mercy of our heavenly Father it is not so now; pray ye that heathen Greenland may not rise up against you in judgment. Live with Christ while here on earth and you will live with Him in heaven. So shall it be well with you now and for ever.

"On the 21st., the longest day, came a winter-like change. It snowed at intervals, with the wind contrary. On the 24th the clouds were dense with snow; the waves dashed over the ice and rocks and the roar of the wind was like that of mid-winter. Time passed on; daily we gazed on an impenetrable barrier of ice which interrupted for miles the exit of the ship. To tarry at a mission station week by week and have comparatively little to do was a new experience. After the lapse of nearly a month thus spent, while walking alone among the rocks, pondering over our detention, the length of the way, the time, the cost, and, humanly speaking, the smallness of the service, all was speedily absorbed and precious too, as the query addressed to Joshua sprang up in my heart with freshness, '*Have not I sent thee?*' A refreshing sense of the Saviour's love and power was also near, and I went on my way rejoicing in Him."

When able to make a start, after another visit to Lichtenfels, Lichtenau was reached with difficulty, and at midnight. A conference then took place as to the best mode of getting to Friedericksthal.

"It was about three before we settled to sleep. At half-past four we rose, and at this critical juncture were enabled to commend ourselves and the cause in which we were engaged to the tender care of the great Shepherd. At half-past seven we left in a small skin boat. In the evening contrary winds set in, and as we passed from the islands toward the open sea we discovered that the entire fiord had become full of ice. The tide was ebbing, notwithstanding which, icebergs and drift-ice were steadily flowing in, urged by the wind, against the stream. The noise of these masses clashing together was incessant, precluding all passage for a frail boat of skin. Up to this point my faith had been strong that it was the good pleasure of our Divine Leader to carry us through to Friedericksthal; I thought I had seen it and felt it so clearly. Cautioned ere we started to beware of the flowing in of the ice, we all concluded, perhaps too readily on my part, that the course of safety pointed to an immediate return. After lingering awhile we did so, and continued our travel to Lichtenau through the night."

After public engagements there, when the Sunday afternoon arrived, Isaac Sharp thus describes a meeting which the Friends held with the Mission family, including three visitors from Igdlorpit: "After a time of silent waiting on the Lord and under some precious sense of help in time of need, they were addressed under an animating sense that the Lord Jesus is the Head of the Church and of *each individual member alive in Him*, although we have this treasure in earthen vessels and need continually to crave, 'Be Thou exalted, O God, above the heavens, let Thy glory be above all the earth, etc.'"

He was on that day interpreted for by M. Warmow, a Moravian Minister, who said on behalf of himself and those present: "We thank you from all our hearts for the visit you have paid, for we have felt the presence of the Lord in the hours we have spent together. When you return to your own land, greet your friends in our name and say we desire the continuance of your

prayers, and that to the end of our days your visit of love and encouragement will be remembered, with prayers on our part that *you* may be strengthened, and *we* may be strengthened, as disciples of the same Lord, to exalt the power of His grace and to glorify His name."

On the following Sunday a meeting was held in the kirk after a call by appointment on the Lutheran pastor. Several hundred Greenlanders were assembled, and Isaac Sharp believed that the message given him was from the words, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life," and "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." When the meeting was over, the pastor, who had interpreted, said, "I thank you for the words you have spoken. Coming from the heart, I have no doubt they went to the hearts of the Greenlanders; they did to mine."

"The next morning," writes Isaac Sharp, "we accepted the pastor's kind invitation to breakfast, after which, his wife and sister being present, parts of the 2nd and 3rd chapters of Ephesians were read, and the family was addressed on the need of daily dwelling near to Christ, and seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and the desire was expressed for the pastor, that in all his ministrations he might seek for Divine unction, and be thereby enabled to minister in its heavenly power, etc."

Another week passed by, and our traveller writes of how his heart was heavy for many days with regard to the unaccomplished visit to Friedericksthal. "The possibility of still going there flashed across my mind with power yesterday, and it deepens to-day. It was so especially whilst waiting upon the Lord in reference to it this morning. But the vessel has been ready for sea for nearly a week, and only waits a fair wind to clear away the ice, which wind may come any day. Humanly speaking, in the event of going to Friedericksthal the probability of escaping a winter in Greenland is very small." Such was the record

written at the time. At a later date he says: "I craved to be strong in faith and clear in view whether to go or stay. If the former, I could but see that a journey of eight days, which, by sudden and not unfrequent accumulations of ice, might easily extend to as many weeks, was every way serious and quite unwarrantable under the varied relations in life, *save as the clearly revealed will of Him who ruleth over all.*"

On the other hand, the portion of service unfulfilled rested as a dark cloud interposing as a veil between my spirit and the precious peace I have been so often privileged to know, in the prospect of rendering to my friends the details of the Lord's gracious dealings, of His forbearance and His love while seeking to know His will and to follow Him. An awful sense passed before me of the sovereignty of the Almighty as the great Disposer of events, and that it becomes not the followers of the great Head of the Church to say, when His will is made clearly known, 'What doest thou?' Nevertheless the intensity of the struggle, language fails to tell. The feeling as of rending and severance from home and home ties, the fear of being mistaken in a matter entirely at variance with the ordinary balancing of things, coupled with an ardent longing to return to Europe, were before me with almost overwhelming weight. Again retiring to my tiny cabin to seek counsel of the Lord, tears came to my relief, followed by a precious sense of love to Christ; and *this* I felt could not be a delusion of the enemy. The surrender was made, preparations speedily followed for the journey, which, amid deep feeling, was marked from day to day with calm and settled trust.

"Six days sufficed for the visit to Friedericksthal, during part of which we sat for hours in a skin boat amid continuously driving snow; a similar journey has been known to occupy as many weeks, and it appears worthy of note that the missionaries of Friedericksthal had returned home from one of their fiord voyages only the evening before our arrival."

After describing the visit to Friedericksthal, he continues : " Our situation in this journey was often critical, but we were mercifully enabled to await the issue with composure, and at length to rejoice that the return voyage was accomplished in safety. On reaching the *Constance* the captain was absent, having gone on a trip to ascertain the condition of the ice. He returned the same evening, and early the following morning a fine wind sprang up, the first for several weeks. By the hour of ten the rocky shores of Greenland were fast receding from our view. The trial had now passed, and to it succeeded the ability, while humbled under the sense of the loving-kindness of the Lord, 'to triumph in His praise.' . . . The heartfelt prayer breathed in Greenland rises again : 'Thy mercy be on all the past, O Lord, for Jesus' sake.' "

His words may remind us of Longfellow's lines :

" And evermore beside him on his way,
The unseen Christ shall move,
That he may lean upon His arm and say,
' Dost THOU, dear Lord, approve ? ' "

In 1865 Isaac Sharp went on a Gospel Mission to Labrador, accompanied by Edwin Pumphrey. Of this journey the former says :

" Probably few religious visits have been paid which have involved so many miles of travel, in order to visit so small a company as that composing the little band of Moravian missionaries, thirty in number, on the extreme north-east of North America.

" On the eastern shores of Labrador are four Moravian Mission Stations, the only direct communication with which occurs once a year, when the *Harmony* is despatched from London with supplies for twelve months, an opportunity being thus also afforded for the transit to and from Germany of the missionaries, their wives and children. Through the care of an ever-watchful Providence, a communication has thus been maintained for a period fast approaching a century, during which, amid varied perils

and, it is believed, in answer to many prayers, the vessel has been brought safely into port. When the Mission of the Moravians was commenced in 1764, unmitigated heathenism prevailed. Notwithstanding the rigour of the climate, some of the missionaries have been spared to labour in that land for thirty, thirty-five, and even forty years. Occasional visits to Europe have taken place, but there is an instance of recent date in which one and twenty years have elapsed in unbroken severance, during which time once a year, and only once, could tidings be transmitted or received with any considerable degree of certainty.

“Severance, perhaps for life, from their children, who are sent to Europe for education or for medical care, involves a surrender, the full extent of which the tenderest *human* sympathy may fail to reach.”

Isaac Sharp's sympathetic words may remind us of the hymn :

“Now we must leave our fatherland,
And wander far o'er ocean's foam ;
Broken is kinship's dearest band,
Forsaken stands our ancient home.

“But ONE will ever with us go
Through busiest day and stillest night ;
The heavens above, the deeps below,
Stand all unveiled before HIS sight.

“If but His hand still hold us fast,
His presence hourly fold us round,
The anchor of our souls is cast
Firm on the one eternal ground.

“Though scattered be our brethren now,
O'er land and ocean far apart,
Yet to one Master still they bow,
To Him they still are one in heart.

“Soon time for us shall cease to reign,
The Saviour calls us home in peace ;
At last we all shall meet again,
And partings shall for ever cease.”

After his reference to the separation of parents and children, Isaac Sharp continues :

“ These, with other privations and trials of faith and patience, were often before me, as a part of the work of faith and labour of love, on which there is good ground to believe that the Divine blessing continues to rest, alike as regards these labourers for the Lord with their devoted wives, and the Esquimaux among whom they dwell.

“ To such a people my heart felt strongly bound, with an unwavering belief that the great Head of the Church had, in condescending mercy, called me by His grace to bear a message of love and sympathy to these far-off labourers in His great harvest field.”

· When he had been about a month at sea he writes : “ After a squally and rolling night, our little sanctuary of three yards square became, through the Divine favour, a banqueting house. The banner over us was love. And in a precious sense of the nearness of that dear Saviour, in whose name this labour of love has been undertaken, tears of chastened joy flowed forth with humble thankfulness for a sense of the nearness alike of His presence and His love, with ability to look forward calmly and confidently to the period to be spent on the shores of Labrador.”

Isaac Sharp describes the Esquimaux as being literally the unwashed, but he was impressed with the propriety of their behaviour when in a religious meeting. He says: “ There was no stirring nor turning about to see who was the last to come in, no whispering among them ; and when, under the preaching of the Gospel, I saw a tear trickling down one cheek, and a tear trickling down the other, there came home to my heart, and I have never forgotten it, the words, ‘ What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.’ ”

One poor old Esquimaux woman said, “ I could hardly sleep at night for thinking of the love of those who have come so far to see us.”

In reference to a Sunday he writes :

"The work for the day, and the order of it, was before me at early morn with considerable clearness. We assembled with the Esquimaux and the Moravian brethren at nine at their morning gathering. My mind was brought under a deep feeling of religious exercise ; nor was it at my own command that neither the Litany in a strange tongue, the hymns, or the organ, disturbed or distracted. I sat beside the brother who had kindly interpreted. When the usual time for dispersion had come, the Esquimaux congregation sat perfectly still. They were reminded that soon we expected to leave their country and to see them no more on earth—of the happy land where God's dear children dwell never to part, and that to be prepared for an entrance there should be the chief care of our lives."

On one occasion when the members of the Mission families were gathered together, the Senior Missionary said : "We wish you to feel that we are very thankful for your visit, and for the ability by which you have been enabled to speak, not only to us but also to the Esquimaux. We shall never forget the time you have spent here. We feel that we are united together in the Lord."

At another time, after Isaac Sharp had finished an address to about 280 Esquimaux, one of the number, a "helper" of the congregation, arose.

"From our very childhood," he said, "we have been taught what to do and what not to do. But we have been too much like foolish children in forgetting. We pray the Lord to help us. We thank Him that He has sent you to us, and though soon we shall see each other no more, we shall remember the words you have spoken. We hope you will get well home again, and that you will tell your friends that we send to them our greeting."

Then he turned to the congregation.

"Speak you not the same ?" he asked.

"Ahila, ahila-tai, mai-law-lee," was the hearty affirmative response of many voices both of men and women.

"It was," says Isaac Sharp, "a beauteous eventide for our last farewell of O-kak ; and as we communed with our friends in the cabin of the *Harmony*, there was a precious feeling of near fellowship. A cordial acknowledgment was once more made by the brethren of the visit they had received : ' It has been a time of much encouragement to us, nor will your visit soon be forgotten either by ourselves or by the Esquimaux. They have already spoken together about it, and expressed their desire more closely to follow the Lord. Pray for us and on behalf of our people, and for our isolated mission work. Tell your friends of our desire to remember them, and to be by them remembered for good before the Lord.'

"We took our leave of them, and saw them no more. Early on the following morning the *Harmony* left the bay, and on the 10th (of September), narrowly escaping shipwreck on the rocks during a heavy gale, entered the Bay of Hebron, the most northerly station of Labrador."

Isaac Sharp was much interested in observing the "working out of daily mission life with its multitudinous and varied claims, among a people needing to be watched over in a prayerful spirit." He had a religious interview with a "helper brother" and three "helper sisters"—natives who came in the dimness of twilight—with one of the Moravians for interpreter. "Their unrefined exterior, singular costume, and features of peculiar mould could scarcely fail to strike the eye of a stranger. Preceded by a little pause of silence, they were addressed on the blessing of being in any way helpful in bringing souls to Jesus. Tears were shed, and they all appeared to listen seriously to the entreaty that they would seek for strength to walk watchfully and wisely before those who might be looking to them for example."

"I acknowledge all you have said," was the response of one of the helper brothers ; "my heart has been warmed by the words you have spoken, as before the Lord, and I hope to have them in remembrance. We are very thankful for your visit."

Again and again Isaac Sharp was told how no one had ever come to strengthen the hands of the labourers as he had done. He writes : "The language, 'Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee,' awakens the deep response, 'To God, only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever, *for that which He hath wrought.*'"

CHAPTER VI.

"Lord, wilt Thou teach us our intense individuality in Thy sight."—*Isaac Sharp*.

"Lives like Isaac Sharp's are an inspiration to those yet in the thick of the fight, or in the morning of life with all its possibilities open to them."—*William Thompson*.

ISAAC SHARP'S personal appearance will be easily recalled by those who knew him. He was short in stature, but it was his bright and intelligent countenance that absorbed the observer's attention. Words, written in reference to another good man, well describe it, particularly when for awhile the strain of the service he so much loved was laid aside in congenial society: "His expressive features were illumined with the commingling of the joy, human and divine, his heart possessed." Not that we would imply that he ever seemed to feel his loyal service to his Lord a burdensome thing.

One of his oldest London friends, J. Bevan Braithwaite, says, "Time after time he would walk from Tranter's Hotel into my breakfast room with that beaming smile upon his face which was in itself a sermon, and which answered to that peace within him that passed all understanding. The testimony of his preaching was emphatically not to himself but to his Lord."

Another of his friends has remarked that he was "possessed of very considerable imaginative power in the best sense of the word." He had much playful humour, and young people enjoyed intercourse with him as much as their older friends did.

We recall in recent years a tea table where the good minister and his host capped one amusing story with another, but, be it ever borne in mind, the kindliness of the man was more apparent than the humour. Never, in public or private, have we heard him speak unkindly of anyone. This kindliness was shown even in a few minutes' chat with the little child in Cornwall—whose father was to be his companion in religious service in the Isles of Scilly and afterwards in Norway—as he asked her the names of her dolls, leaving a pleasant memory which long years cannot wear out :

" Kind words, so short to speak,
But whose echo is endless."

His happy buoyant nature could generally see the silver lining of the darkest cloud. His universal courtesy was also a marked feature in his character. He was skilful in changing the current of conversation when he saw no advantage in expressing an adverse opinion, or had formed no decided view of his own on the topic. Everywhere, both at home and abroad, he avoided controversy.

As we read in the current number of *The Friend*, the following remarks in reference to the late Anna Maria Fox, we feel how truly they would, with the mere change of pronouns, apply also to Isaac Sharp, "The source and spring of this beautiful life was felt by all to be the love of God shed abroad in her heart by the Holy Ghost. Rejoicing herself in a simple faith in the truths of the Gospel, the catholicity of her spirit was remarkable ; and though deeply attached to the principles of our Society, her large heart embraced humanity, and recognised what was of God in every creed and profession."

In his old age, away in a distant land, after an allusion to "*glorious*" weather, he goes on to say : "Surely it is well to get hold of every bit of anything that has a *lawful* glow upon it."

How much he brightened the lives of others as well as his own by his readiness to gather up all rays of sunshine during a life whose pathway was crossed many a time by the shadow of sorrow and suffering ! There seems to be something suggestive in his use of the word " glow," as if all truly bright and pleasant things in life, however small, were illumined from above.

His voice was musical, and his arrangement of words was at times characteristic of his poetic temperament, whilst free from any trace of straining after effect. For him habitually to express himself, when speaking in public, in just the phrases that others did, would have been unnatural. But the words he used were generally very simple ones, flowing naturally and easily from a heart brimful of its winning message of a Saviour's love, and power to save from the penalty, guilt and dominion of sin. He loved, too, to set before others the joy of willing-hearted service and loyal obedience to Christ.

One who knew him intimately for fifty years writes : " He was always a favourite with those in the office with whom he worked ; kind, courteous, loving, and pure in heart, he made no enemies. Quick and intelligent in business matters, he was sanguine as to results. There can be no doubt that in the early stages of the growth of Middlesbrough he was a very useful man, and many of his schemes for its development proved successful. His warm interest in Great Ayton School no doubt much aided the progress of that institution. I always had a high appreciation of his pureness of heart. There was no guile about him. His sermons were full of love and faith. The faith of his latter life was most remarkable. The guidance in which he trusted never seemed to fail him. His visions came clearly as to what was required, and he followed them. Some doubted. I should have doubted myself, except I had had faith in his faith, in his love for his fellow men, and his desire to serve God in his day and generation."

In turning over the leaves of his voluminous diary, it is touching to notice the frequent references to illness and suffering. But, as he said in one of his letters, "Enduring grace, the grace of endurance is mercifully granted me."

In another letter, after writing of an unexpected delay of four hours at an English railway station, he adds, "But the time was not made more wearisome by unavailing regrets."

In a letter to a young Friend, we find the following remarks: "Satan seeks to enter in at any chink he can discover, and to beguile either in height or depth, or aught beside. But we are not ignorant of his devices. Better, however, by far, to be too much cast down than to be too much exalted. But better still to repose in the love and mercy of our Father, whose sympathy for the least of His saints is inexpressible and exhaustless. And, do not forget, we are all called to be saints. May this be thy watchword, 'Ye are complete in Him.' When in any wise cast down, be it thine and be it mine to flee for deliverance to the Mercy-seat.

"The crucifixion was quickly followed by the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, Who ever liveth to make intercession for *us*—that is for thee and me, and those who are dear to us, yea for ALL. So let us be of good cheer, seeking to realise the monition, 'Abide in ME.' Satan becomes powerless when Christ is all, and it is written, 'Their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord.'

"As for the future, we have the gracious promise, 'As thy days, so shall thy strength be,' and this embraces all, body, soul, and spirit, so be of good cheer. . . .

"If the Great Apostle desired the prayers of His spiritual children, well may we adopt the language, 'Pray for us.' Farewell."

Isaac Sharp much liked a little piece called "My Prayer," and quoted a few lines from it in the lecture, "Incidents of Travel in Many Lands," which, in his

ninety-first year, he delivered at Devonshire House, London, three months before his death :

“ Let me not die before I’ve done for Thee
My earthly work, whatever it may be ;
Let me not leave my piece of ground untilled,
Take me not hence with mission unfulfilled.
Let me not die before I’ve done for Thee
My earthly work, whatever it may be.”

When he first read these lines as a newspaper cutting, they much impressed him. As regarded himself, the prayer seems to have been abundantly answered.

“ Be not too anxious for seeing fruit,” he said one day ; “ receiving the seed *from* the Lord, scattering it *for* Him, it cannot be in vain. There will be fruit, whether you see it or not. When God gives you a gentle intimation to do something for Him, do it, and do it at once. Do it in humility. Be blessed and made a blessing.”

A propos of these remarks, we quote the words of a writer of the present day, who is “ strongly impressed with the conviction that no human being is capable of judging with respect to the worth of work done in his own age and generation. Subtle consequences, *working below the surface*, are often far more weighty, far more lasting than the most approved ‘ results ’ following immediately upon certain efforts.”

Once in a large meeting, Isaac Sharp alluded to the great good that might arise from more of manifested cordiality amongst Christians. “ Why is there not,” he said, “ more of this Christian greeting on meeting and parting, on the part of the friends of Jesus ? Why so little of encouraging one another in the ways of God ? How few lay themselves out to be strengtheners of the brethren. Jesus is seldom on the lips, because the heart is not full of Him. We are not lights in the world, because we keep not in the sunshine of the Saviour’s presence.”

Once, when separated for a time from his companion in religious service in Norway, he remarked in a letter to

his dear friend Harrison Penney, "Two weeks ago to-morrow I awoke in Hammerfest alone—yet not alone—though with a feeling of untold isolation."

His loving, sympathetic interest in his relatives and friends is a marked feature of his large correspondence. Thus we find him sending across the ocean these cheering words to an anxious mother: "Young mischief, if only it gets afterwards into right grooves, works up into good stuff! And such thoughts may well fill a mother's heart, as she yearns over those whom God has given to be trained 'in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' I have faith in a mother's love and a mother's prayers."

In another letter written before starting on his long last mission journey, he says, "My dear love to B. For herself and for me, I believe it will be best to accept a *paper farewell*, yet with it goes a literal sigh."

Amidst the perils and service of South Africa he writes to some friends undergoing deep trial, "It may be a comfort to you to be reminded of a few words of George Fox: 'The Light, the Power, the Truth, the Righteousness, did it ever leave you in any weather, in any storms or tempests?'"

The keen physical suffering he sometimes underwent served with him to enlarge the power of sympathy. In a letter to a nephew he says, "Taught in the school of suffering, I feel deeply for those who are called upon to endure. Those nights and days in Norway may not be forgotten. It sometimes felt as if I could understand more than ever before, the sufferings of a groaning creation." A lady in America, who had been his hostess, and whose husband had given him professional aid, alludes to his brightness even in illness, and remarks, "His wonderful sympathy made many of us feel that he was our special friend."

"He was so real" are the words of another, when speaking of how much at home he was with young people, "and his intercourse with them was full of ease and

happiness." "The joy of the Lord," says another Friend, "was his strength indeed, and his life was full of joy such as we could not but long to enjoy also. The young could see by his life what a happy thing a Christian life may be."

Prominently on one of the pages of his diary stand out the words :

Domino mens nixa quieta est.

The mind on God supported is at rest.

Motto of *Isaac Penington*.

In a letter to an intimate friend he says : "When the cup is full to overflowing, whether of joy or sorrow, if the overflowing be as in the presence of the Lord and unto Him, a blessing is in it. Ever be this blessing thine."

With children he was a favourite wherever he went and in all stages of his life. For the album of a mother in North Carolina he wrote the following verse :

"Came not the mother o'er the hills to bring
Her tender little ones to Christ the King?
He loves the children, who was once a child
So good and gentle and so meek and mild.
Who gave His life for them and for us all,
Thus to redeem from sin and from the fall.
He folds His lambs, He careth for His sheep,
And we should crave of Him our souls to keep.
Lord of the sparrow and the seraphim,
He loves that little ones should come to Him."

A relative writes : "My recollections of him extend over about forty-five years. The feeling that perhaps first comes to mind is that of his brightness. That he had his times of depression, I only know by hearsay. He was *intensely* sympathetic, entering into the interests of young and old. My child of ten looked forward to his visit in his ninetieth year, just as I at the same age looked for his visit in his fiftieth. Young and old were never tired of listening to him, and they alike felt him to be a true friend. With any

one in suffering he was very tender. His keen sense of humour made him always attractive to children, but his humorous stories and his good advice were admirably dove-tailed. From my childhood he has always seemed to me to be continually acting under a sense of divine guidance, and to have felt the Master very near to him. I have known many good and lovable men, but have come across no one who appeared to have less of human weakness about him than he seemed to have. Probably in business affairs he was too trustful of other men, too sanguine as to results and consequently too speculative.

"With all the plainness of his attire there was often a *spiciness* about his outward appearance. He was very particular in these things. Careful and methodical as he was in rendering accounts of moneys entrusted to him, he was free and liberal in his own expenditure especially when others benefited by it. His accounts rendered to the Meeting for Sufferings* are models. Never at a loss as to how to get out of a difficulty, never appearing to forget a matter of real importance, he would lose umbrellas and gloves, and was conscious of a weakness in this direction. Many correspondents have written to him *most* gratefully as to his loving influence and kindly help and sympathy under very varied circumstances. I find how much his character comes out as I read these appreciative letters, so diverse in interest and the standpoint of the writer. I was much interested in reading a letter from one whose breadth of thought would have alarmed many. I do not suppose he, [Isaac Sharp], agreed with all that his correspondent wrote by any means. Yet the writer felt that he could fearlessly unfold his views to him. . . . People of very different temperament were equally sure of his sympathy."

* The standing Executive Committee of the Society of Friends which retains the significant name it adopted in the seventeenth century during the cruel persecution of Friends. The name is not inappropriate at the present day as plans for the relief of almost world-wide suffering are considered by this committee.

When Isaac Sharp was about the age of sixty he met with losses and complications in his private business affairs which caused him the keenest anxiety, and led to his winding his business up, disposing of all assets, and paying his creditors. But he never recovered the position of comparative ease in which he had previously lived. He left his pleasant home, "Dairy Knoll," near Middlesbrough, and henceforth had no settled abode of his own. He resided for some time with his daughter and son-in-law, and afterwards with his brother and sister Dunning, and, later still, with his widowed sister, Priscilla Dunning, at Broadstairs. For a while he seemed well-nigh crushed by this blow, brought so low indeed that death would have seemed a welcome visitor. How amidst all this he could have carried on his labours as a minister is a marvel. As years passed by, he realised more fully than was possible at first, that this overwhelming trial led to the detachment necessary for the wide service that lay before him.

In reference to this trial the relative last quoted from says :

"There can be no doubt that he had placed confidence in some person, or persons, who proved unworthy of it. He had probably embarked in too many schemes for a man absorbed in business on the one hand for the Pease family, and often away for months together on religious service. I have alluded before to his sanguine temperament, most useful to him throughout life, and yet tending to foster a speculative spirit. It should not be inferred from his business difficulties that he was not a business-like man. A man of business he was in many ways essentially. He was ready of resource, fond of experiment, had always a wide grasp of things, and also a knowledge of detail ; to the last he was receptive of a new idea. He was an excellent accountant, and very accurate in any accounts he had to render as a trustee, or as a travelling minister. He kept up his character for this to the last, and was most anxious to do so, notwithstanding the labour involved. With his industry I am more and more impressed."



DAIRY KNOLL, MIDDLESBROUGH.

But whilst Isaac Sharp could accomplish so much himself, he did not forget that others of less constitutional power and of different nervous calibre would easily break down under over-pressure.

Thus, when writing from the East to a correspondent who had alluded to strain ever on the increase, he says : "Is there no remedy, no lessening, somehow, of the overburden? Do not forget the simile, 'the last nutmeg breaks the camel's back' ; only, the camel is too wise when overweighted to carry the burden till a part of it is lessened ! So I gather in this land of camels."

One who knew him intimately in his later life says of Isaac Sharp : "Quick, active, of ready contrivance, and with deft fingers, he would sometimes indulge in impatience at sight of clumsiness or awkwardness in others, if he was in a hurry and was delayed by these untoward displays. But on such occasions he would speedily atone for his momentary aberration by a kind word, an apology, or a grateful expression of thanks. . . . The cheerfulness with which he usually met every trial and adapted himself to changed surroundings was one of his most striking characteristics, and conveyed to those about him a beautiful lesson of Christian fortitude and resignation.

"Of his perseverance in overcoming difficulties his whole life bears testimony. When travelling on a religious mission with his friend Barnard Dickenson, about 1846, they felt called to visit Fair Isle, situated mid-way between the Orkney and Shetland Isles. There was no direct communication with that solitary spot, and it was with some difficulty that a small vessel was found going in that direction. She was a sailing vessel engaged in the whale or seal-fishing industry. The cabin in which Isaac Sharp slept was so foul with the smell of the oil that the silver watch in his pocket was blackened with sulphureted hydrogen. Next morning the two Friends walked through the corn-fields of the island on their way to the little church where they were to hold their meeting, and the

springing corn may have suggested the text of the address which was first delivered. Some of those who were present seemed impressed by the words spoken.

“Fifty years afterwards, when on his death-bed, it was Isaac Sharp’s privilege to learn, through a letter to *The Friend*, published in its issue of 21st of First Month, 1897, that a life-long blessing had resulted to one individual at least, from attending the meeting held there.

“He had a good memory for names and faces, which was a fortunate circumstance in one who travelled so much and was brought into contact with so many people. The interest which he took in the affairs of others, temporal as well as spiritual, his readiness to listen to details, and to impart counsel, and the clearness with which he would remember such details and subsequently inquire about them, even to the last week of his life and in the midst of physical suffering, were striking evidence of

‘A heart at leisure from itself.’

“His devotion to old friends and colleagues was evinced in the way he preserved all memorials and recollections of them; inanimate things connected with them often carefully put away and reverently cherished; mosses gathered from a grave, leaves or flowers plucked in a garden on the day of some happy meeting; letters, scraps of hand-writing, even copies of minutes or accounts, were among the many memorials of the loved and departed found carefully labelled and put away among the possessions which he left behind him. Mingled with these were also simple mementos of remarkable places he had visited in company with others, stones picked up on sea beaches, pebbles from the rivers of Palestine, relics and curios of all kinds from many lands. Many of the latter were given him by valued friends whom he met with in the course of his missionary travels, and as he was eager for all kinds of geographical and ethnological knowledge, none of these came amiss to him.

“ He told me that he was never quick at book-learning. He learned no language other than his native tongue. Through life he was eager to acquire knowledge, and his interests were very wide, but he was more ready to acquire that knowledge which comes by observation and experience than the lore which is gained from books. He was removed from school at the age of fourteen, as was the custom in those long-ago days, in the case of those intended for a business career.

“ Through life he was much addicted to dabbling in medicine. This desire to experiment upon himself with new or favourite remedies was not unfrequently a source of embarrassment to physicians and nurses. He used to tell with great gusto of how he treated a poor man’s cow and brought it back to life, after the veterinary surgeon had declared it was impossible for the animal to recover ; and he would especially dwell upon the astonishment of the cow doctor as each morning he put his head in at the door to enquire, ‘ Well, is that cow dead yet ? ’ to find it still living and even improved in condition.

“ All through life he was as faithful in reproving wrong as he was careful not needlessly to wound the feelings of others.”

The following extract is from a letter written in the summer of 1890, when heart, head and hands must, in one way or another, have been occupied with the prospective long mission journey, and is very characteristic of his genuine and practical sympathy. The note was written to the daughter of one of his early fellow-labourers, who, when having occasion to write to him while in the North of England, had alluded to indisposition. He writes : “ I lost my voice in Africa, and recovered it in two hours by the use of the eucalyptus *leaves*. I cannot offer these, but the accompanying eucalyptic oil is worth trying. It may help the throat and chest too. Thou wilt, I hope, realise the loving sympathy which accompanies it. Stay indoors one whole day rather than imperil further service. Body, soul,

and spirit all need watching, and is not the spirit of the Lord gently saying, 'Fear not, for *I* am with thee,' sweet word of solace in all circumstance and change." Then follow clear directions on inhalation.

Very varied is the interest of his correspondence. In one of his letters he refers to "*Trust*, that grandly impressive and emphatic word. Sometimes, when there is no immediate present need, the dear Lord does not let us see far ahead. What about *The Faith*, or its fruit, were it otherwise? A precious heaven-sent lesson encircled me to-day in a wide embrace, in a sweet reminder of the words, 'Cast thy burden upon the Lord.' He would not have us bear it all alone, whether visible or invisible. Moreover, herein we perceive the two-fold part, *my Lord and I!*"

In the middle of another letter he exclaims, "What next? Why, that monkeys talk to each other, and man has undoubtedly caught their language! Meantime, down deep in the heart of man is that of which the monkey knoweth not, a yearning inexpressible which nought but the love of God and the revelation of His Son can satisfy, as made nigh in the blood of Christ."

An old friend of Isaac Sharp writes of "the aptness with which he was enabled to call up from the store-house of his memory some incident or anecdote by which to illustrate what he had to speak about. In this way he was successful in riveting the attention both of young and old, whether in a private circle of friends or before a congregation or audience. Wherever he went, he seemed to carry with him the power of an enlivening, inspiring presence, animating many a solitary or drooping fellow-pilgrim labouring in far away lands or nearer home. I have received numerous letters from abroad making mention of his visits and their effect. Moravian missionaries from Labrador and Greenland have told us, even after the lapse of a quarter of a century, of his cheering words and presence.

“Old Captain Linklater, the commander of the *Harmony*, the Moravian Mission ship, with tears in his eyes related to me many years after, some of the incidents of the voyage in which Isaac Sharp was his passenger *en route* for those lands of ice and snow, where his visits came as a streak of sunshine amongst those devoted messengers of peace and goodwill to men. The worthy old captain wound up his remarks by saying, ‘If ever there was a man of God in this world, it was Isaac Sharp.’

“In Africa and elsewhere, the Moravian missionaries cherish lovingly the remembrance of his visits, and whenever I have met with companies of the Moravian brethren, which has frequently been the case, there have been numerous inquiries about him. His visit of two years amongst our own members in the Australasian Colonies endeared him greatly to them. Entering, as he did, into sympathy with them in their various trials, their hearts were drawn out towards him as a messenger from the Lord; and lasting impressions for good have followed in the wake of this truly pastoral visit.”

A resident of Molino, Florida, an old Croydon scholar, writes: “How well do I remember as a boy the visit of this good man to our schoolrooms and to the meeting-house, the powerful preaching which we, as children, listened to with a feeling of awe from one whom we recognised as a great traveller in Iceland and the North of Europe. It had been long years since I had heard of Isaac Sharp, but I, with many others, dropped a tear after reading ‘Last Days of Isaac Sharp, by B.G.,’ in *The Friend*. The words of the apostle may well be repeated: ‘I have fought a good fight; I have kept the faith.’”

The testimony of Professor Magnusson, of Cambridge, to Isaac Sharp’s character is of interest. “Isaac Sharp was, within my experience, the most perfect type of a true Christian. To me, who knew him for more than five and thirty years, his life never presented itself under any other aspect than that of saintliness. To begin with, he was a

Nature's gentleman of as perfect a type as ever could be met with. In his heart I never could trace the least element of bitterness. He abominated evil, but he did it from an overflowing love for good, from a deep sense of sorrow at seeing the ideal of good disfigured or mutilated. His heart was as generous as his character ; his moral constitution was noble. In his whole personality there was nothing but what was lovable and attractive, nothing but what ennobled by contact. . . . With a son's devotion, I clung to this noblest of Christ's knights from the day we first met until the end, and in memory I continue to do so still."

In 1869 Isaac Sharp acted as companion to James Owen, an American minister, in his religious service in Norway. Three years later he visited the meetings of Friends in the south and south-west of England. In 1873 he was again engaged in religious service in Norway. Here he was taken dangerously ill in December, and it was not until the following April that he could be carried in an ambulance to the water's edge for embarkation. He passed over the North Sea when it was *calm*, not a common occurrence in spring, as, with his thankful spirit, he did not fail to note. He was nursed in the house of his brother-in-law, John Dunning. His physician and friends had but little hope of his rallying, but he saw wide fields of service before him. William Jones, to whom he was closely united in the bonds of Christian fellowship, and who was for some years his neighbour and partner in business at Middlesbrough-on-Tees, thus writes :

"Sunderland, 29th October, 1897.

"Our houses being situated near each other facilitated much social, friendly intercourse, so that our relations were those of most intimate friends. I well remember his return in 1874 from a religious visit to Norway in a very suffering condition. On several occasions I found him

prostrated by pain and want of sleep, the result in part, no doubt, of the actual cautery which had been applied to his back. Though very weak in body, he was strong in faith. No murmur ever escaped his lips, but in his own bright and cheerful manner he would say: 'There can be no doubt about my being in my right place *here*,' meaning *in bed* at his own home, which was then at the house of his brother and sister Dunning. Fearing that he was growing weaker under his protracted sufferings, I one day spoke sympathizingly to him, gently intimating that it might be the will of his heavenly Father to take him from his bed of sickness to Himself. The reply he gave me, after a pause of some length, was uttered in brief sentences with impressive intervals between. After the lapse of so many years I cannot pretend to give his very words, but having regard to his extremely prostrate condition, the spirit of his communication was so deeply impressive, that I cannot, as long as memory lasts, fail to remember the essence and substance of it.

" 'O my dear friend,' he said, 'my Lord has shown me whilst I have been laid on this bed of sickness, that He has yet much work for me to do, and that I shall be raised up to do it. He has shown me clearly a prospect of service at Cape Colony, including visits to the mission stations in the far interior. Thence to our Friends' Missions in Madagascar. After this, extensive service awaits me in each of our Australian Colonies and in New Zealand. I have further seen that the mighty Pacific Ocean must be crossed, and that I am to enter the United States of America by the 'Golden Gate' of San Francisco. The work before me there includes not only the meetings of Friends, but also the various missions among native Indians, the Negro population, and the far-off missions in Mexico.'

" It is now matter of history that Isaac Sharp was raised up in renewed health and vigour to circumnavigate the globe in the accomplishment of the service which he foresaw on his sick bed.

“What was to myself most remarkable in all this was not so much that a man over seventy years of age should undertake and successfully complete so large an enterprise—one calling for much physical strength and endurance—but that by the *faith* that was in him he was able, months if not years beforehand, to outline with exactness the extensive service before him, which life and strength were given him to fulfil to the letter. May it not indeed be that the very strength of his faith, as ‘seeing Him who is invisible,’ constituted the secret of the rare vitality which so often kept him up when journeying ‘in perils oft’ and in times of dangerous illness.”

There were four months of suffering in his own land. In the following December he was well enough to be once more in London, and then went to the far north of Scotland on religious service. Subsequently he was brought very low by three attacks of jaundice, and to the lookers-on death appeared imminent.

An allusion to this long illness has been made in our first chapter as preceding the largest service he ever undertook, which occupied seven years. The summary of this journey was so scanty there, that a fuller account is due to the reader. But before Isaac Sharp entered on it, he went with Allen Jay and Robert Doeg to Denmark, Minden, and Norway, and also accompanied Rufus King in some religious service on the European Continent.

CHAPTER VII.

"I want, I want, I want the Christians to go all over the world, spreading the glad news." *Almost the last words of Reginald Radcliffe.*

IT was in 1877 Isaac Sharp started on his seven years' mission, his companions then being Theodore Harris and Langley Kitching.

"I pray it may be in all humility that I am sensible of being entrusted with a high commission," he wrote from South Africa, the country first visited. "The guiding hand of the Lord has surely brought us here. How great is the mercy of being able to tell of perfect health and strength!"

At Wellington, Isaac Sharp and his companions were the guests of Andrew Murray,* pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church, whose name is now so widely known and loved in England. A meeting for worship was held at Wellington on the evening of the arrival of the Friends. As it was thought that most present would understand English, no interpreter was provided. An elder of the Church who was present said in Dutch, in reference to himself and two other elders: "We could not *understand* what was spoken but we felt the *power*." Andrew Murray's remark was: "For six Sundays past I have been preaching to my congregation on the power of the Holy Spirit and His teaching, having felt my mind drawn to do so."

Isaac Sharp was interested in Andrew Murray's earnest efforts for the religious education of the young residents in

* Author of "Abide in Christ," "The Spirit of Christ," "With Christ in the School of Prayer," etc., etc. Jas. Nisbet and Co.

South Africa. The American teachers in the numerous high-class schools for girls had been trained at the college founded by Mary Lyon, at Mount Holy-oak, U.S.A.

At Worcester, the Friends had a hearty welcome from William Murray, one of the four brothers of Andrew Murray, who, like himself, are ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church. His brother, James, is a farmer in the Transvaal. In reference to the Murray family, Isaac Sharp writes : " Their right hand of fellowship to us has been most cordially extended in their places of worship and out of it."

At Stellenbosch, Isaac Sharp and Theodore Harris held a meeting with professors, teachers, students and scholars ; Theodore Harris offered prayer, and Isaac Sharp called the attention of the theological students to the sending out of the disciples by our Lord without purse or scrip, and yet they lacked nothing ; great seriousness and deep attention were manifested by the students. The Friends dined at Professor Neethling's, whose wife is a sister of Andrew Murray—all whose sisters are either the wives of ministers or are themselves holding important posts in educational establishments in Cape Colony.

The writer has seen a photograph of the dignified, white-haired Mrs. Murray, surrounded by her eleven grown-up sons and daughters. She was married at the age of seventeen. Her son Andrew loves to tell how when she was once asked what had been her plan of bringing up her children, she answered, " I had no plan." The secret, he realised, lay in her own close walk with God. Theodore Harris writes : " With such men as the Murrays, Neethling, Hofmeyr, and Marais guiding the training of the sons and daughters of families scattered all over this colony, what may not be expected of South Africa. I wish my lame pen could do justice to all we have witnessed." In Professor Neethling they found a " feeling, faithful, and fluent " interpreter in the meeting held in the evening in the Dutch Reformed Church.

It had been the practice at Cape Town for many years for ministers of different congregations to meet periodically for prayer and social intercourse at each other's houses. The Friends were invited by a clergyman of the Church of England to one of these meetings held at his house. The guests assembled at 8 a.m., fifteen in number. The clergyman made a few introductory remarks in reference to the Friends' visit to Cape Town and the service that lay before them in South Africa. With much Christian kindness he expressed the desire that their way and work might be guided and blessed by the Lord. His prayer was earnest in tone and large hearted in sympathy. After a brief pause Isaac Sharp knelt in prayer and was followed by an Independent minister, "whose gift in prayer and its utterance," writes the former, "is of a striking character." The next to engage in prayer was the Wesleyan superintendent minister, who for more than fifty years had served the Lord in India and elsewhere. He earnestly besought a blessing on the labours of the Friends and that the power of the Spirit of God might be with them in their journeying and service for Him. Sir David Tennant, Speaker of the House of Assembly, followed, writes Isaac Sharp, "in reverent, humble, devout supplication, in words fitly spoken, seasoned with heavenly grace. . . . Much harmony of utterance prevailed. A deep solemnity was present. . . . Then came the morning repast, with a flow of agreeable conversation, without a trace of stiffness, moulded albeit with a sense of the object of our coming together, and by the presence of the Master. An opportunity was embraced for saying a few words before we parted."

The Friends gave a return breakfast when nearly twenty were present, who afterwards enjoyed religious fellowship together.

"By this shall all men know that ye are MY disciples, if ye have love one to another."

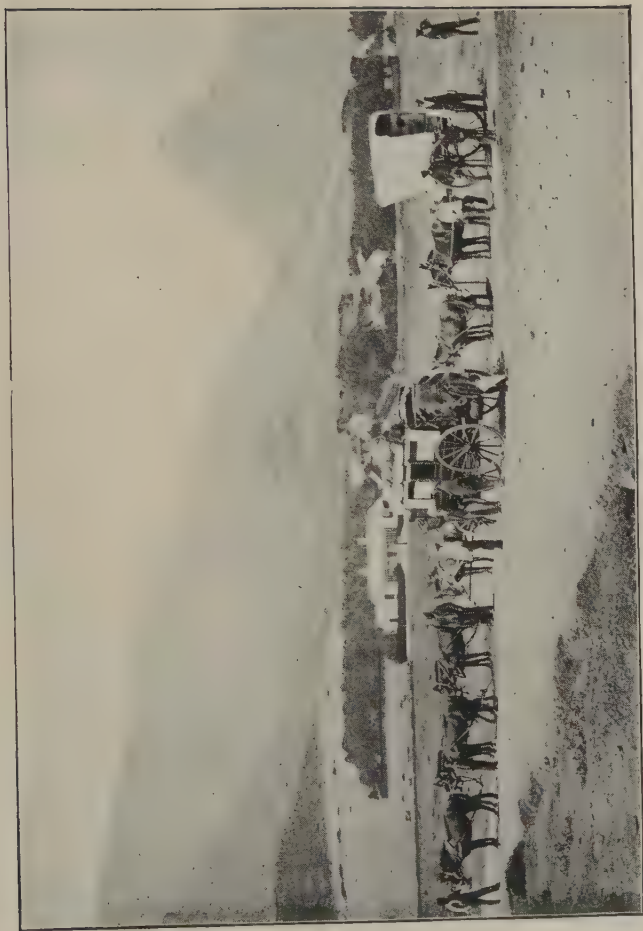
Amongst the engagements at Cape Town were a meeting in the Wesleyan chapel; visits to the hospital, to

the convict station, and to Robben Island, where the lepers, the chronic sick, lunatics and convicts were visited, inspected, and addressed; the Ladies' Home, the Kaffir College and several schools were also visited.

"Robben Island," writes Isaac Sharp, "had been on my mind and heart before landing on the African shore. . . . One of the convicts, a Dutchman by birth, and of superior education, interpreted for us fluently. He spoke a few earnest words at parting: 'The Lord bless you, the grace of God go with you wherever you go.' . . . On the kind invitation of Lady Frere we took lunch at The Vineyard with herself and family. Sir Bartle Frere is still absent in the disturbed district near the frontier."

Early in 1878 Isaac Sharp writes: "The time absorbed in arranging for a long journey in this land is only to be learnt in the school of experience. War, drought and pending famine cast their shade over the borders of the land whither we are bound. We know not the issue, but we are enabled to look upward with lowly confidence and quiet trust, and to commit our way and our all to the Lord."

Two days later they set out on their long and toilsome journey. The merits and demerits of oxen, horses and mules had been freely talked over. Mules were decided on—eight for the four-wheeled conveyance and four for the baggage cart. All attempt to lessen the number proved fruitless. On leaving Cape Town, unsolicited letters of introduction were given to the Friends from the Colonial Office, from Bishop Jones, from the Auxiliary Bible Society, etc. Mr. Thompson, the Independent minister, kindly rode a short distance with them, and they much enjoyed his company. Referring to the drought and the war, he said: "The cloud will be lifted if it be right for you to go, and if not, the Lord will open some other way." The first stage brought them again to Stellenbosch, and once more they were entertained at the Dutch parsonage, where professors, teachers and students were invited to meet



MODE OF TRAVELLING IN SOUTH AFRICA.

them. It was 11 a.m. before the company separated after a time of prayer.

"The visit you are paying," said Professor Neethling, "comes with *freshness*. Had it been from a body more nearly akin to our own, it would have been less striking." The travellers were now joined by Charles Henry Radloff, a theological candidate, as interpreter and travelling companion.

"At 9.45 a.m. we set out," writes Isaac Sharp, "on a journey of excessive jolting, and arrived at French Hook about 5.30. The pastor was absent, but the elders of the church soon arranged for a meeting. The bell was rung, and about 200 assembled, a remarkable gathering at so short a notice. Of ability mercifully granted for ministry and prayer there was no lack. The silence was a silence of solemnity, and at the close of the meeting the elders were cordial in their thanks.

"Our tents were outspread on the common, the mountains were around us; baboons were heard among them. The nights were chill, as nights in South Africa are wont to be. We breakfasted next morning at the house of a well-to-do farmer and enjoyed a cordial welcome. After reading and prayer I paid a visit to the daughter of our host as she lay ill of a fever, a little visit bright in the retrospect.

"We walked up the French Hook Pass to ease the mules. The views were grand, Norwegian-like for scenery, and from the heights we looked down with deep interest on the secluded vale, the early home of the French refugees. Having gained the summit, we outspanned on a grassy slope with a girdle of mountains around us. Langley Kitching's eye was quickly arrested by the wild flowers and their beauty, as indeed it well might be on account of their variety and profusion. Toward evening we reached Villiersdorf, and were cordially welcomed by F. L. Cachet, by birth an Israelite. The next morning a company assembled in his chapel. He was exceedingly kind, and

said in reference to our meeting : ' If you had known every word of what has been said for weeks you could not have followed it up more closely. It is the Lord. O what a blessing ! It has been greatly refreshing. We are glad to have you here, and I acknowledge it on my own behalf, and on behalf of the congregation.' He kindly bore us company a few miles, and then near the banks of the Sonderen River we parted in much love."

A welcome awaited the Friends at 7.30 p.m. at Genadendal, the oldest of the South African Moravian mission stations, where about 3,000 people of a mixed race are more or less intimately associated. In reference to the Sunday morning meeting Mr. Radloff, the student who was the Friends' interpreter, remarked : " The best meeting we have had." The Moravian station at Elim was also visited, and loving parting words were spoken : " I have only one regret, that you cannot stay with us longer. A good impression has been made."

A few days later the convict station of Tredouw Pass was visited and a considerable time was spent with the prisoners. Mr. Radloff read from the third chapter of the gospel of John. Isaac Sharp and Theodore Harris then addressed the prisoners, some of whom were under sentence for life. Then Isaac Sharp knelt in prayer. He says : " It was a solemn time. We are thus brought into communication with some of the degraded and suffering, and our hearts are moved for them. We did not seek this kind of service, but it has opened up for us, we venture to believe, under Divine guidance."

At George Town the travellers were most kindly welcomed by Mr. Müller, the minister of the Dutch Reformed Church. He conversed with Isaac Sharp about his coming to South Africa, and the latter gave him a little outline, as he says, of " his first *mental* sight of Table Mountain," and of his Norway illness and recovery. Mr. Müller read his certificate for service.

"Do you expect to do all that?" he asked half incredulously of Isaac Sharp, who was now in his seventy-second year.

"Yes," was the reply, "if the Lord give me length of days and strength for it. My going about from place to place is in the exercise of faith. Thou knows, as much as I do, what I may have to say to the people."

"I have not faith for that," said Mr. Müller, "but sometimes when I have prepared a sermon my mind has been led off in another direction, following which I have been blessed."

Mr. Müller alluded very cordially to the Friends' mission journey, and the good likely to result from it. "It is so refreshing," he said, "it will be a blessing to the colony."

Archdeacon Fogg called on the Friends and very heartily expressed his desire for a blessing on the work before them. At Avonteur they were kindly entertained in the house of a private family, with whom after breakfast there was, writes Isaac Sharp, "a sweet season of exhortation and prayer. Our young friend C. H. Radloff also poured forth a prayer with thanksgiving for the unnumbered and unmerited mercies of the Lord: 'O Lord Jesus! except as engrafted in Thee, we are nothing, and have no power, for Thou alone art the way and the truth and the life. So we ask of Thee, O Christ, more life—more life! Amen.'"

A most interesting time was spent at Willowmore, where the pastor, George Murray, and his wife, the former a brother of Andrew Murray, gave a double welcome and heartily promoted the object of the visit. "Then came," writes Isaac Sharp, "the *inevitable farewells* with the assurance from George Murray that our visit had been 'a time of refreshment, never to be forgotten,' and so we parted in love. Many memories which come welling up are just crushed out for lack of space. . . . Whilst Theodore Harris has been laid by, Langley Kitching and I have visited the mission stations of Bethelsdorp and Enon. We shall

miss our dear friend Theodore Harris greatly, but no doubt springs up as to the course he is about to take. He would willingly have remained for a season, to spend and be spent in this southern clime ; but guidance having been earnestly sought, peace is permitted to rest on the anticipated issue. To use his own simile 'we have been borne along as on the top of a wave' ; and having reached Port Elizabeth, he is able to regard it as a goal, and in the loving-kindness of the Lord departs thence on his homeward way, thankful, restful and trustful."

Again he writes : "We parted company with our friend, Theodore Harris, at the end of the jetty, whither we had gone with him through an African pour-down, at which many rejoiced, for the like had not been witnessed for two years, during which the drought had been heavy on the land. The boat which bore a beloved fellow-labourer away was quickly out of sight. But what a change ! four of us had travelled on together for more than two months, daily sharing the successive changes of a pilgrim life, and now the broken band was reduced to Langley Kitching and myself, our able interpreter, C. H. Radloff, having judged it for the best to return to his studies."

In a letter written a few months later to Mr. Radloff, Isaac Sharp says : "Africa is soul thrilling, and wide in its wonderful claims on love and sympathy—years might leave it unexhausted, if life were young. There is a guidance profitable to direct in the path of wisdom and safety. Be this both thine and mine ; ever the more, the more we seek it, surely it will be." Plans and arrangements now required remodelling. The baggage cart and four mules were offered for sale. One driver deserted, the other absented himself without leave for thirty-six hours. Isaac Sharp quickly saw that this difficulty, like many others, was overruled for good. Two new men were engaged, one of whom spoke English far better than did the two previous drivers.

On a Sunday spent at Prentice Kraal a little company assembled twice in the dining-room of the hotel. No

regular service was held at this place, and Langley Kitching encouraged the people to endeavour in the future to meet for public worship, a suggestion that was well received. A feeling of solemnity pervaded the meetings. At this place the Friends were told that the Kaffirs in that part were only waiting for tidings of success to join those already in rebellion. By expert foot-runners from station to station news can be conveyed 180 miles in twenty-four hours, the speed of the swiftest Kaffirs being that of a good horse.

About this time we find Isaac Sharp writing of "another hot day of travel and *dust breathing* ; eyes, nose, throat, head, and chest all came in for a share, and not a small share either, as hour by hour the clouds of impalpable powder proved irresistibly penetrating. . . . We reached Graaf Reinet, and were kindly met on the doorstep by the pastor, Charles Murray, who bade us welcome to the parsonage."

Of the Murray family Dr. Moffat says : "Happy family ! I was well acquainted with them and their late father." Isaac Sharp writes : "We have met with five of the sons, all in the ministry, and three daughters, the wives of ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church. I sit side by side at table with this sunbeam mother, and love to share her company. I inquired after her grandchildren, and how many they numbered, and quickly came the outspoken response :

" 'Seventy.' "

"These wonderful Murrays have exerted a powerful influence, and are still exerting it, educationally as well as ministerially."

Isaac Sharp then describes a Sunday at Graaf Reinet. "Breakfast at 7.30, preceded by a hymn and Psalm xl., after which Charles Murray knelt in prayer for 'help and a blessing on those who shall speak to the people to-day ; for the brother who for the first and last time should address

them, and for the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit.' . . . At 1.30 he took us to the Sabbath School; over 300 present, a lovely sight. The teachers and the scholars were commended to the Lord in prayer, with an earnest craving that this school might be a training school for an immortality of life and joy. At 3.30 the congregation assembled in usual course. C. Murray kindly gave me a portion of time which was occupied in exhortation and prayer, faith being the burden of the exercise of my mind, that faith wherein there is victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Like his brothers, Charles Murray proved to be an excellent interpreter."

The evening meeting was the largest which Isaac Sharp had seen in South Africa. It was held with the congregation of the Dutch Reformed Church. He writes: "Charles Murray gave out a hymn and offered prayer in Dutch. The meeting was then left open for me. After a brief silence, I read the 22nd chapter of Revelation, and then explained the mode of worship among Friends. After this came a hush and stillness over the whole gathering. With much freedom and with felt power I was helped to speak for about three-quarters of an hour, and after a pause, knelt in prayer. Brief silence followed, and then I felt best satisfied to say, 'Our meeting is now near its close, and I can feelingly say, in the words of the last verse of the Book of Revelation, The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.' After a time of social intercourse and family worship, we retired peacefully to rest with a thankful sense of the mercies of the day."

The labours of the following day were closed by a meeting held, at the request of Isaac Sharp, with the object of reviving the Graaf Reinet Bible Association, which was effectually done, and a collection made of £8 12s. 9d. Isaac Sharp and his companions had been frequently thus engaged.

On that evening, Episcopalian, Wesleyan, Dutch Reformed Church, and Independent met together. Mr.

Murray was much pleased that such a meeting should be held, as he had long desired it.

The coloured people were not forgotten, and Isaac Sharp was much interested in visiting a chapel bought and paid for by themselves and managed most creditably. The openings for service at Graaf Reinet had far exceeded his expectations. "At length came the farewells, and it felt like parting with old and valued friends."

"In South Africa," he continues, "day at sundown rapidly yields to the darkness, especially with a cloudy sky overhead. Farmhouses are few and usually far between. At 5.30 p.m. we saw one not far off. The weather was threatening. If, on application, we failed to obtain accommodation for the night, a dark outspanning awaited us; so my tent was promptly set up. Langley Kitching preferred to use the wagon rather than erect tent No. 2 in the dimness which already enshrouded us. With the fuel collected in the gloaming, a fire was made and the kettle boiled with all speed. By this time we could scarcely see the slices of ham in the frying-pan. Alas! in the hurry of the moment, one portion was hopelessly surrendered to the dust. A board served for a table. We were just ready to sit down when a few premonitory drops of rain fell in our midst. The moon was obscured. A while after this a thunder-storm, long anticipated, began its course and continued through the night. From time to time the little tent was lit up with flashes, being momentarily filled with light. The pealing thunder right overhead, crack after crack, was solemn in its effect, for I was sensible of a manifest inward vibration, as the words came forcibly before me, 'The earth trembled and shook,' and with them also the quieting assurance, 'The Lord reigneth.' Down came the rain in sheets, and the bed of the rivulet near, from whence the evening before Langley Kitching procured dry wood for fuel, now resounded with the rush of water in its course. It was just the night for a sheepskin kaross, which proved to be an excellent wrapper; and that the tent poles bore the strain was cause for thankfulness.

"In the morning we rose soon after six o'clock and breakfasted early. The storm had passed away, but in our minds was left a deep impress of its reality. In the tent, Langley Kitching and I read together the 16th of John, and then our heartfelt thanks rose up to our Father for all His mercy and His watchful care through the past night, and in our journeying. A little before nine we set off. The chariot wheels dragged heavily along, now and then six inches deep in mud. Our progress was very slow, under two miles an hour at times ; so about half-past three we drew up at a roadside hostelry, Zuurpoort by name, over 5,000 feet above the sea-level. The landlord gave us some hints as to our mules and mode of travel, and warned us very decidedly of our need of two or four more."

Again after giving an account of religious service at one or two places, Isaac Sharp writes : "Shortly after dark we reached Verborgen Fontein, but found no encouragement to stay, there being no fodder for the mules. We waited for the moonlight and then set off again for Stirk Fontein, where we outspanned, and by the light of the waning moon, within an hour of midnight, sought for sticks to kindle a fire and boil a kettle, having previously set up our two tents in the wilderness. The thermometer stood at 45 degrees next morning after sunrise. . . . In several directions over the extended plain we saw herds of springbok. There were many hundreds apparently. They are fleet of foot and bound high and gracefully. Langley Kitching killed a cobra about five feet long. It raised and flattened its head and was ready for mischief. The sun had gone down behind the mountains as we halted at the roadside farm of Matjes Fontein, where a homely family in a kind and simple manner bade us welcome, and did their best to entertain us for the night."

Writing a week later of the sandy and toilsome roads and very slow progress, with Kuruman still a hundred miles distant, even Isaac Sharp admits that there was a call for

the "exercise of both faith and patience." He was pleased to find at one halting place abundance of water and good grass for the mules; and sat down with his friend, free from anxiety, to partake of tea. Meanwhile, the discontented mules disappeared, and the moonlight search was made for them in vain. On the following day two of them were found; as eventually the other six were, although they had strayed forty miles on their way back to Cape Town.

The Zulu War was now impending, and all South Africa was in a state of unrest.

At the remote station of Kuruman, Isaac Sharp and his companion, as stated in Chapter I., were kindly entertained at the Moffat Institution by Mr. and Mrs. Mackenzie, and whilst there, heard of the terrible threefold murder at Daniel's Knil. Mr. Burness, a merchant and an officer of the government, together with his wife and brother were shot dead in cold blood. "A thrill ran through us," writes Isaac Sharp, "as we listened to these terrible tidings, for on our way hither we called at the house of J. J. Burness, and received from his wife a present of white bread and eggs, a simple but valuable contribution toward the comfort of our journey. We shook hands with all three and had a cordial invitation to lodge for a night on our return, should we pass that way. . . . Our dear friends at home, will not, I trust, be anxious about us. Through Divine grace and mercy, my path of duty appears plain. The watchword given me when this concern for religious service was laid before my friends—

‘Forward and fear not,
Let thy faith be firm,’—

is with me still. Meanwhile, great excitement prevails at Kuruman, and the residents there are removing their furniture and goods, and coming up here for safety, in fear of an onslaught from a band of lawless marauders. *We* look on it as a storm already past, although entertaining

little doubt that the blood-stained plot of Daniel's Knil, so fearfully executed there, was intended to embrace Kuru-man and other places. Walking by faith and not by sight I came to Kuruman, and surely it is of the loving-kindness of the Lord that we passed Daniel's Knil in safety, and were brought hither just at the time when in their hours of proving, not knowing what a day might bring forth, we were able to sympathize with our missionary friends, and unite with them again and again in commending ourselves and one another to the Lord. While earnestly desiring to move onward we could not leave our friends in the midst of the looming uncertainty of a darkened atmosphere.

"The natives here, I believe, are quite loyal. At the Scripture reading, last evening, John Mackenzie knelt in prayer, the spirit of prayer being spread over us. He had previously read the 91st psalm, the 9th and 10th verses of which were felt to be sweetly in harmony with the calm and quiet of a peaceful eventide. His prayer was blended with thanksgiving for all the mercies vouchsafed to us. Then came a tender pleading for the misguided people now abroad in their work of wickedness; and for us 'bowing here at Thy footstool, and for Thy servants and ministers, and teachers, grant Thy help, O Lord, in these hours of sifting, and of Thy mercy bring us out as gold tried in the furnace.' After this we sat by the wood fire on the hearth till past midnight, unconscious of the rapid moments as they passed."

A week later, in a letter to J. B. Braithwaite, Isaac Sharp writes more gravely with regard to danger: "My valued companion, Langley Kitching, and I have sought this morning to know our Heavenly Father's will, and believe that in going by way of Motito towards Moseopototo, and *possibly* to the station beyond, we are under the putting forth and gracious guidance of the Lord Jesus. But I would not withhold that the way is perilous, and may be so for many weeks; and only in the humble

reverent belief that the seal of the Great King is set upon it, dare I go forth in the direction now foreshadowed, and to which I feel so deeply bound.

"The season of the year is favourable and the climate healthy. Lions are few and rarely seen, and from our fellow men, however fierce and lawless, there is safety in the keeping of our Father, and herein is my trust. 'Yea, I will trust and not be afraid.' Remember us for good."

In a letter, he playfully remarks: "They sometimes smile and say that I am proud, and will not submit to put on the old man. Then comes another smile as I agree to the verdict and add, 'Yes, and but for a spice of this you would not have seen me in Africa.'"

CHAPTER VIII.

“Shall Britain to remotest parts
Transmit her sins alone,
And not engage with eager heart
To make her Saviour known?”

“Even in lands like India and China, which are so far civilized, and where there are great philosophical systems of religion, what awful perplexity and bewilderment about life and its issues there are! And how amongst the women of these great lands there is a suffering that makes the very brain reel. And if that be so in countries like China and India, what is one to say of a country like Africa desolated in savagery? It is easy to read of it, but unless we have imagination, we miss what lies behind the words . . . Apart from the spiritual aspect of the missionary enterprise, it is far and away the greatest philanthropic enterprise on the face of the earth to-day.”—*G. H. C. Macgregor, M.A.*

IT was on the 31st of May, 1878, that Isaac Sharp and his companion started on their hazardous journey.

On the following day he writes: “A sort of panic prevails at Motito as at Kuruman—an undefined apprehension of an unknown something. There appears to be a lawless band abroad, and the vicinity of Motito is a favourite resort for the secretion of stolen cattle. At one o’clock we unyoked our oxen. They betray a strong propensity to roving—stray away in preference to grazing quietly and have to be closely watched. The road is heavy with sand; our mules would have quailed under the burden and we are glad to have oxen instead, but it does seem strange that two cavalcades should be moving in opposite directions—the missionary and his family fleeing from the place at

which we expect to lodge and spend to-morrow. Starlit winter nights when the wind blows freely are chill for our open air evening meal."

The following day was Sunday and although the pastor was away the natives met as usual, and about ninety people were present. Isaac Sharp says that "the whole effect and the impression it conveyed was wonderfully in contrast with the heathen of a bygone day and the neighbouring heathen still."

He writes in reference to the next day: "We travelled on until between 8 and 9 p.m. The stars were bright and the young moon beautiful. We watch its nightly increase with interest. It is so great a help to have moonlight for our tent erections. After supper we sat round our camp fire. The fifth chapter of Matthew was chosen; prayer followed—heartfelt and deep for a blessing on each and all. It was soul-sustaining to realise that the eternal God was near to us and we to Him in this vast wilderness.

"Day by day we journey on; water is scarce. We pass along without seeing a single traveller. It feels like a severance from the rest of the world in a vast and intense isolation. In the forenoon we came to the dry bed of a river, where by digging in the sand the water collected, and our cattle drank and were refreshed. We continued our travel after a short outspan, for the most part over heavy sand, but now and then over stones and slopes, in imminent peril of an upset. About 8 p.m. we encamped for the night after a lovely day, in which overhead was a dome of blue not deep but cloudless."

Again he writes of this strange journey: "We reached Molohe by moonlight; seeing some of the women heavily at work, the inquiry was put: 'What are the men doing?'

"'Nothing, nothing,' emphatically spoken, was the suggestive reply.

"From Molohe there are two roads, and our driver chose the one to the east, and took us three days out of our way, and we were greatly astonished to find ourselves within seventeen

miles of Zeerust in the Transvaal. It gave us, however, the unexpected opportunity of visiting the Lutheran station of Linoxana, where we were kindly and hospitably entertained, and where the way was most pleasantly made for a religious sitting with the mission family, including two young missionaries recently arrived. . . . At Manuana we outspanned for the night, about three miles from the place where Livingstone had the encounter with the lion which crushed the bone of his arm.

"We have had some hard travel from the heavy lurches of the wagon over huge stones, through the drifts, and along the water-worn furrows. The strain on the nerves was great and difficult to endure with equanimity—an upset first on one side, then on the other, seeming imminent for hours at a stretch. The ride among the mountains was nevertheless very fine, and at night the moon, now nearly full, was brilliant. By its silver light I read two verses in a New Testament, which opened at 2 Corinthians ii. 14, 15, which with the following verses felt comforting."

At last, on the 15th of June, the weary travellers reached Kanye in the gloaming, and were cordially welcomed by Mr. Good, the resident missionary, and his wife. Their two little boys had lately been drowned whilst bathing, and it is easy to imagine how comforting to their sorely stricken hearts would be the sympathy and prayers of Isaac Sharp. Mr. and Mrs. Good loved to remember that their boys and an older lad who shared their fate had all three on the night before the accident sung hymns till they fell asleep.

Isaac Sharp, as we have seen, had known in comparatively early life what keen bereavement is; and his sympathy and power to comfort others were, we may well believe, not lessened, but rather enlarged, because it might be said of him in Lowell's words,

"Nor hath thy knowledge of adversity
Robbed thee of any faith in happiness;
But rather cleared thine inner eyes to see
How many simple ways there are to bless."

On the Sunday spent here he gladly availed himself of an opportunity to address some 200 natives who had recently emerged from heathenism, and who were closely packed in a shanty of their own erection.

He writes : " The voice of warning and entreaty was heard in their midst, as well as a word of loving encouragement to those who love the Lord and follow Him. As in Esquimaux land, so here, the services are usually short, the native mind being scarcely able to endure continuous thought for any lengthened period. Met again at 3.30 p.m. The evening was spent socially at James Good's, with a season of religious exercise in Scripture reading and prayer." In a Bible Class held on another day, he noticed that Mr. Good's teaching abounded in figures, illustrations which are " very telling on the native mind and mode of thought, and which they evidently enjoy." He, himself, spoke to them from the text : " I know my sheep, and am known of mine," expressing his desire that, knowing the Saviour, the Good Shepherd, they might live near to Him.

The Chief of this district had forbidden the sale of brandy, and had lately seized several casks which were found in a merchant's possession, and he seemed puzzled with the thought, " Why does not the Queen of England do the same ? "

Whilst Isaac Sharp was at Kanye, he found, whilst looking at an album, the following lines, which he copied in his diary :

St. Andrew of Crete: A.D. 600.

" Well I know thy trouble,
 O my servant true ;
 Thou art very weary—
 I was weary too :
 But that toil shall make thee,
 Some day all Mine own,
 And the end of sorrow
 Shall be near My throne."

On the 21st of June, the *shortest* day, the travellers left Kanye, Mr. Good and his little boy going about three miles with them, on their way to Koloberg. Isaac Sharp writes : "The granite rocks of Koloberg, and the stalwart six-foot men who came round our wagon there, live photographed in memory, blended with the remembrance of the labours of Livingstone and others in that place at an early day, and of the Christian care of those who still live and labour in that interesting spot."

On the next day the travellers reached the Mission Station of Moleopole, near the town of the well-known chief, Sechele, and had a warm welcome from Mr. J. S. Moffat (the son of Dr. Moffat) and his wife. On Sunday morning Isaac Sharp was interested in meeting Sechele's son on his way to conduct a morning service. War had lately seemed imminent, and it was believed that the chief would hardly have been able to hold back his people from the shedding of blood but for the calming influence of thirty Christian natives.

Of Sechele he says : "He invited us to his house, and we were shown into his drawing-room, druggeted with a velvet pile pattern, over which, in the centre, was suspended a large glass chandelier. A sofa of modern shape and a few chairs, etc., betokened his position in life. Sechele is about six feet high, swarthy but intelligent looking, with a decided air of authority about him. He was dressed in European costume. He wore a hat, gold watch and appendages, and two rings, one on each hand. He is of portly build and ponderous movement, and about sixty-five years old. He asked our names, and repeated Langley Kitching's so as to get the right sound. His wife entered and sat down. She was also dressed in European clothes.

"He inquired why I had come to South Africa, and it did not appear quite easy to make him comprehend."

Isaac Sharp then told him of an old man in the Shetland Isles who had said to him, "Do you believe in the

Lord Jesus Christ?" and who, when he had had the reply, "Oh, yes, in all sincerity," added, "Then, welcome here."

"In the same love of the Lord Jesus I have come to Africa," said Isaac Sharp. To this the chief assented and significantly nodded his head. They then went together to the place of worship, where about three hundred people were assembled. After some hymns had been sung, followed by Scripture reading and prayer, Mr. Moffat came and stood beside Isaac Sharp, and, after explaining to the people the reason of his visit, asked for a little time for silent waiting upon God. The congregation included some members of the chief's family. Isaac Sharp says he felt very powerless for utterance, and prayed for help. He had an attentive audience, and addressed them from the words, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "The Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation."

"Do you believe," he asked, "and have you this power? Rejoice in it, you who know and love the Lord. And you who feel the striving of the Spirit of God in your hearts, resist it not, but *accept the conviction for sin as a token of the love of God, and come for pardon and peace to Jesus, whose blood was shed for each one of us.*"

The Friends felt quite at home under Mr. Moffat's hospitable roof. He said: "You seem to have been often on the edge of danger, but never in it." Here Sechele paid them a call, and brought them the gift of a goat. He also invited them to lunch. Mr. Moffat acted as interpreter; they found Sechele was well versed in the knowledge of the Bible.

On the 28th of June the travellers started on their journey to Motsodi and Shoshong. It would be, they knew, no easy work to reach the latter place, but it so much rested on Isaac Sharp's "mind and heart" that the attempt, at least, must be made. There are three routes, and the shortest lies through a desert and is waterless for

many miles. They soon fell in with a party who had gone to Shoshong by the short route, and were now returning by the longer one. In answer to the eager inquiries put to them, they said :

“ On no account go by the short route. By it there is no water for one hundred miles, but plenty by the long way. Lions are in both.”

“ Did you see any ? ”

“ No, but we heard their roar, and saw their spoor four and five together.”

At the Mission Station of Motsodi the Friends had a warm welcome from Mr. and Mrs. Brink, of the Dutch Reformed Church. A call was paid on the chief, Leuchive, who was sitting in the open air surrounded by his counsellors and retainers, about seventy in number, many of them hard visaged heathen. Isaac Sharp says : “ The words arose in my mind, to which utterance was given, that God has His witness in the hearts of men, of good and evil, and that He is no respecter of persons ; and that having obtained pardon and peace through the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for each one of us, it was my desire for the chief and all his people that they might have the same happy experience.” This was followed by a short prayer which was not interpreted.

Mr. Brink was “ not strong in English,” but he said to his guests, “ I do not think you can quite feel and understand how great the consolation is to us of having such a visit.” His parting words were : “ The Lord Jesus will be with you. We have the assurance of it in the last verse of the last chapter of Matthew, ‘ Lo I am with you always.’ ”

Nani, the driver, who had agreed to go on to Shoshong, now refused to do so, and said he should go home. Earnest prayers for grace and guidance were put up while the prospective path of duty still seemed to lead to Shoshong.

"We outspanned," says Isaac Sharp, "between 6 and 7 p.m. The day had been cloudy and the night was chill. I read awhile in my tent with only the thickness of canvas between the outer atmosphere and a frail tabernacle in the wilderness, till the cold crept over the shoulders and down the back. The howl of the jackal was loud and not far from us. Outside the tent just after sunrise the thermometer stood at 25 deg. Fahrenheit." Two days later on the seventy-second anniversary of his birthday, far away from kith and kin, we find him writing :

"Hark, hark, from Time's old belfry,
Hear ye not the chime ?
Three score and ten and two,—
Can this indeed be true ?
'True,' loving echoes answer,
And from a far-off clime
Come mental telephones
O'er land and sea :
'Remember us, for we
Remember thee.'"

Notwithstanding the warning received about the short route to Shoshong which lies through the desert, Isaac Sharp, although he could "not reason it out," believed that the right thing would be to choose that route. Tidings came of a raid which made his men dread the long route, while they said they were willing to face the desert with all its drawbacks.

On the 8th of July the start for the desert journey to Shoshong was made. The travellers were ready at 1.30 p.m., but the oxen had strayed, which caused some delay. When they at last set off in an African wagon with a team of twelve, Mr. Moffat quaintly remarked :

"There is a black ox among them given to lie down when the sand is heavy ; never heed, he will soon be put on all fours again."

Isaac Sharp writes : "The oxen were intractable for the first half hour, and the gear was repeatedly displaced,

for the righting of which we had to stop several times. . . . The moon eight days old right overhead favoured our night travel. The stars were brilliant at early morning ; Orion was visible, and the firmament with its starry depths was beautiful to look upon. We have the Southern Cross as a constant and familiar friend. Next morning we breakfasted between seven and eight, and then went to the Kopong water pool. Parrots and other birds were in the trees or on the wing, drawing near for their morning bath and to drink at the 'fountain.' One came so near I could have thrown crumbs to the spot. They are not apparently often molested in their happy chattering. On some of their wings, metallic lustre, blended with blue and gold, was radiant in the sunlight of early morning as they circled round the only pool probably within the reach of flight for miles—a pool equal to their requirements, but very scant for our twelve oxen."

Then came the desert, rightly named "*The Thirst*," where on the second night, at a certain fork in the road, the driver chose the eastern route, to which he was accustomed, instead of the northern, through which the travellers had been advised to go. This they discovered in the morning as indicated by the sun, and very anxious they felt both for man and beast. After five hours, however, of toilsome progress, they reached a large pool of mud and water, at which they filled their casks before the oxen stirred its depths, which they effectually did whilst most refreshingly quenching their thirst. In the evening the howl of the hyæna was heard and a jackal was seen on his way to the pool. Although on the occasional track of lions none were neither seen nor heard. A little before sunset the Friends received a cordial welcome from Mr. and Mrs. Hepburn at the Shoshong station of the London Missionary Society."

"Thankfulness and peace," writes Isaac Sharp, "were the clothing of my spirit without one shade of doubt to mar so great and unmerited a mercy, in reference to this extended travel of toil and trust."

The cost of this journey to the Society of Friends was great, but, as a minister of that Society, Isaac Sharp, of course, received no stipend, and sad would it have been if, when plainly called by the Lord to such service, pecuniary aid had been grudged him. It is pleasant to read in a contemporary journal of the Society the following remarks : " When we consider the nature of the work, *the spirit in which it is undertaken and pursued*, we cannot fail to see that it is a work of righteousness and truth, and one which we may well consider a privilege to share. I have a vague impression that George Fox somewhere says that to contribute of our outward means is '*the least love*' ; and I have often felt how true it is that for those who remain at home, enjoying the comforts that word home includes, whilst one here and another there is leaving all, toiling and trusting from day to day, our being permitted to share in some degree in the service by material support is indeed *the least* we can or ought to do. It is a low form of sympathy and love, yet it is love and will be accepted as such by Him who distributeth the gifts ; whilst eternity alone can reveal the good that is done, the encouragement given, the weaknesses strengthened, the faith confirmed, the convictions deepened, the truth spread, the cups of cold water administered by these disciples of Him who breaketh not the bruised reed, nor quencheth the smoking flax wherever they are found."

These remarks may remind us of C. Wordsworth's lines :

" We lose what on ourselves we spend,
We have as treasure without end
Whatever, Lord, to Thee we lend,
Who givest all.
Whatever, Lord, we lend to Thee
Repaid a thousand-fold will be ;
Then gladly will we give to Thee,
Giver of all.

It must have been deeply interesting to Isaac Sharp to hear on his arrival that there had lately been a decided

religious awakening at Shoshong. The chapel could no longer hold the congregation, so the men came at one time and the women at another. Still space failed, and all met together on a slope near the Mission House to the number of 3,000 or more.

On Sunday afternoon, Isaac Sharp had a little meeting in Mr. Hepburn's sitting-room with about twenty English-speaking people. After reading a portion of Scripture he told them that, having regard for the spirituality of true worship, the Society of Friends always spent a part of the time of public worship in waiting on the Lord in silence. "Where two or three are met together in the name of the Lord," he said, "there is a church."

Shoshong lies north of the tropic of Capricorn, and about midway between Cape Town and Lake Nyassa. The six days journey from Moleopololi was over an almost continuous plain 3,500 feet above sea-level; the greater part of the distance was waterless. On approaching Shoshong the huts and kraals of the Bamangwati were very noticeable. Their chief is Khama, honoured and beloved by his people, who were now enjoying the fruits of a good harvest after five years of scarcity and great suffering.

During a scorching drought, the missionary, the chief and some others believed it would be right for them to have a week of prayer, of which Isaac Sharp tells the story: "Very soon the clouds which had been hovering passed away and the sun beat down with vehemence upon the parched-up corn gardens. The heathen said in derision: 'Your prayers have sent the clouds away.' Intercession was continued, nevertheless, day by day. The wind meanwhile blew down from the kloof, from which direction the rain rarely, if ever, comes. Towards the end of the week clouds were seen gathering against the kloof-wind and from the rainy quarter. Prayer continued twice a day. It was still scorchingly hot. The Sabbath came round again but still there was no rain. Faith had been on its trial. The

very next day the rain began and continued day by day for four-and-twenty days, and a harvest followed, the like of which for abundance was never before remembered. Even the heathen took note of it. . . . With an inner circle of believers, including the chief and two of his brothers, with inquirers seeking religious instruction, with many able to read or learning to read, and with a large increase in the attendance of public worship, the mission at Shoshong is alike hopeful and encouraging to those whose hearts are bound up in the promotion of the kingdom of the Redeemer."

When Isaac Sharp wrote in 1878 of Khama, he did not know that before twenty years had elapsed the name of that chief would be a familiar one in England. From the *Cape Argus* he quotes the following passage :

" Khama, chief of the Bamangwati, said in reference to the introduction of alcoholics : ' Some time ago I forbade the use and sale of liquor at this station, as I did not wish my people to learn the vice which has destroyed so many. You act in direct opposition to my wishes. I try to teach my people better things, and to raise them out of the mire in which they are sunk. But how can I possibly be successful when they see you white men, who have had God's word for so many years, doing those things which are wrong? Now, I am determined to have no more of this. You must go away from here. I never wish to see you again. As to those who have not broken the law, I trust they will do all they can in preserving law and order.' "

How becoming of any Christian ruler are his words, and how easily we can imagine the man who spoke them to look, as Isaac Sharp says, " Every inch a chief ! "

Poor Khama ! How long his difficulties last. As we write of him at the present date, the daily paper by our side, in its report of yesterday's parliament, tells us of the question asked of the Colonial Secretary, as to whether his attention had been called to any " complaint made by the

chief Khama, respecting the establishment of huts for the sale of liquor in connection with the railway through his territory, and in contravention of the agreement made between him and the Chartered Company."

Isaac Sharp was deeply interested in some details of experience in missionary life given him by Mr. Hepburn.

"We never know," said the latter, "how much we owe to the prayers of our friends for us. *I have often felt, out here in Africa, that someone was praying, or had been praying for me.*"

Isaac Sharp paid a few religious calls from house to house among the merchants, and had a kind reception. Allusion is made in Chapter I. to the Bible Society meeting held at Shoshong.

It was on August 1st that the Friends started for their return journey through the desert. Before they left the house, Mr. Hepburn proposed that a portion of time should be spent devotionally, to which glad assent was given. He knelt in prayer: "Our Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for Thy love. We thank Thee for the gift of Thy Son Jesus, and for all Thy blessings. Grant us the help of Thy Holy Spirit. Show us Thy will, O Lord, and give us strength to do it. We thank Thee for the travelling mercies granted to our friends hitherto, and pray that no evil may befall them in their journeyings. Grant that where they come Thy servants may be cheered and *strengthened in their work*; and that the comfort and joy of these visits may be to them as great as they have been to us. We ask these favours for the sake of Jesus, and in His name. Amen." The Friends followed briefly in prayer and thanksgiving. They felt it to be a parting in the unity of the Spirit and under the overshadowing of divine love.

Again, at Moleopololi, the Friends were glad to renew their intercourse with Mr. J. S. Moffat. At this time life seemed unsafe in the disaffected districts, and more bloodshed was anticipated. Before the travellers pursued their journey, Mr. Moffat called his family together, and as all

sat down in silence, he knelt to commend his guests to the Lord in a solemn prayer of faith: "O God, with full confidence we commend these dear brethren to Thy guidance and protection. O God, who appointeth the bounds of our habitation, be with them and guide them, and prepare the way, and grant, even as to us, that a well of consolation and of joy may be opened wherever Thou leadest them." Tears filled Mrs. Moffat's eyes as she took leave of her guests, and said, "We have cause to thank God for your visit."

In conversation, Mr. Moffat remarked: "The heathen are not alike; there is a great difference. Not knowing, and never having had the law of God, they will not be responsible for what they never possessed." "Then came," writes Isaac Sharp, "an idea, which had never occurred to me, as regards the heathen who may be saved in their heathenish limited knowledge, that their heaven will be on a lower range than that of the exalted, refined Christian mind. This idea clothed in Scripture language would perhaps be, 'One star differeth from another star in glory.' He also thinks, and I unite in the thought, that *too much* is expected of a generation just emerged from heathenism; too little allowance is made for their heathen associations and surroundings."

In one of his letters to his sister, Isaac Sharp says: "To be in the midst of the heathen is so new. The different facial expression of some cannot be word-pictured, nor the wonderful contrast when the result of Christianity has fashioned the visage to its own likeness, and men may take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus."

In another letter he says: "Mission life has its trials, but it has its triumphs too. I look on and marvel at that which God hath wrought." And again, "My heart yearns towards those who are engaged amid the gross darkness enshrouding the souls of the people among whom they labour."

When describing one of the meetings during this last visit to Moleopololi, he writes: "Sechele, the chief, sat on a bench below the pulpit. I said I should like to say a few

words to him, so I was asked to sit beside him. He looked thoughtful as I went on to say that he had been much on my mind in these times of trouble, in which I thought he might find instruction and comfort in many of the psalms ; that whether his days were many or few, he might ever ask counsel of God ; for it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. We may draw near to God through Christ to ask of Him, and be helped herein by the Holy Spirit ; that this was my desire for the chief, and that a blessing might be on him and on his house." Sechele then spoke of the uncertainty of tidings which might soon come, and bade Mr. Moffat say for him, "I feel the value of your counsel."

Agnes Giberne in her "Life of Charlotte M. Tucker," refers to "Certain popular ideas that on the whole the Heathen may hardly be worse off as Heathen than they would be as Christians. The less knowledge, the less responsibility we are told ; and a good deal of cant is talked on this subject. Those who have seen how things verily are in heathen lands, those who have witnessed the awful and desperate cruelties which there prevail know what the argument is worth as to the present life. . . . It may well be that one man brought out of the darkness of heathendom is a prize worth fifty times—or five thousand times—the money expended in bringing him. But this would not be seen from the mercantile point of view. Neither does it touch the true gist of the question."

CHAPTER IX.

“ With willing heart and longing eyes
To watch before Thy gate,
Ready to run the weary race,
To bear the heavy weight.
No voice of thunder to expect,
But follow calm and still ;
For love can easily divine
The ONE BELOVED’S will.”

Writer unknown.

“ The whole question of our duty hinges here : are we doing or are we not doing that which God wills us to do ? All theories respecting outlays, values, results, sink into utter insignificance beside this question.”

Agnes Giberne.

WRITING from Shoshong, Isaac Sharp says : “ We see in this place the outcome of mission work amongst the heathen, and truly the change is marvellous, but it needs to be remembered that some who are still weak in the faith have come up out of the depths of degradation and the untold abominations of heathendom. . . . In their heathen language our term for love, so familiar and so dear—for ‘ God is love ’—is quite unknown.”

Early on the 20th of September the travellers reached Boshof and at once called on the pastor, Mr. Van Wyk, as the clock struck ten. Between his own door and the vestry, Isaac Sharp handed him a card and was about to explain who he and his companion were, when, glancing at the card, the response came : “ Yes, I know.” The chapel was entered at once, and then and there Mr. Van Wyk “ very kindly and feelingly ” interpreted for Isaac Sharp in addressing about fifty young people who had just assembled

for a special service. Pressed for time, the Friends soon passed on, but not before Isaac Sharp had written a birthday verse for his host :

“Peace be thine at thirty-two,
Peace with praise the journey thro’.
Dedicated—bound yet free,
‘Onward’ may thy motto be.
By the blood of Christ made nigh,
Walking with a single eye.
Ever be thy trumpet call,
‘We are nothing, Christ is all.’
Peace be thine at thirty-two,
Peace with praise the journey thro’.”

“Fellowship one with another,” wrote Isaac Sharp, “is a marked feature of this journey.

“The sun was shining obliquely in the north-west as we entered Kimberley. The remaining daylight just sufficed for our finding a resting place for ourselves and the oxen. And so in the loving-kindness of the Lord it came to pass that after a strength-testing and continuous travel from Shoshong of more than seven weeks, preserved from all danger by night and by day, we arrived at our destination in good health, in safety, and in peace.”

In his third call at the post office at this place Isaac Sharp succeeded in obtaining a four months’ post. “I read and read and read,” he says, “till near the small hours, and then lay down to rest.” On the following day a call was paid on Colonel Lanyon, the Administrator of Griqua Land West, who kindly invited the Friends to the Government House as being a quieter place than the hotel. At first there seemed to be no opening for religious service in Kimberley, and the earnest prayer went up under a deep sense of need, that the Lord would show the way. This prayer was very soon followed by a kind call from a pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church of Dutoits Pass :

“Can you not come and say a few words to our people, and the coloured congregation I could get together at short

notice for any evenings?" As Isaac Sharp answered this question he thankfully remembered the words: "Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear."

One evening, a meeting was held in the Wesleyan Chapel. Before going to it the travellers took tea with the minister, Mr. Bew, and a few of his friends and enjoyed together "the sharpening of the iron." When the social meal was finished, Mr Bew said:

"The organist is here, shall we have a hymn or two at the service?"

"If you wish it," was the reply, "but as the advertisement was issued for a meeting of *the Society of Friends*, I should prefer no singing."

"I am quite willing," was the pleasant response; "I only wanted that it should be understood."

About five hundred were assembled in the chapel. Isaac Sharp read the fourth chapter of the Gospel of John, and made a few remarks on the passage, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." This was followed by a time of silent waiting upon God, and then by prayer and exhortation. Great seriousness and attention were manifested throughout, and Isaac Sharp had what he calls a "thankful sense of the owning of the Lord" with regard to the meeting. Vocal part had been taken in it by several who were present.

Probably the idea of silently waiting on the Lord in faith and expectation, scriptural though it be, was a new one to almost every one present. "*David sat before the Lord*," writes Charles Haddon Spurgeon. "It is a great thing to hold these sacred sittings, the mind being receptive like an open flower drinking in the sunbeams. . . . Quietude, which some men cannot abide because it reveals their

inward poverty, is as a palace of cedar to the wise, because along its hallowed courts the King in His beauty deigns to walk. . . . Herein I follow George Fox most lovingly, for I am persuaded we most of us think too much of speech. . . . Brethren, rob not your hearts of the deep sea joys."

On the evening of that day, Colonel Lanyon made some inquiries about the Missions of the Society of Friends.

"I suppose you have been sent out by them?" he said. By way of answer, Isaac Sharp handed him his certificate, in which the Colonel seemed to be interested.

"Well, this is a document which may be for children, and children's children," he said.

A day or two later, the Colonel received a telegram from Sir Bartle Frere with a kind message of congratulation on the arrival of the Friends at Kimberley, safe through all danger. Great kindness and consideration was shown them during their stay at the Government House. In reference to the day of departure, Isaac Sharp writes: "After lunch, at 1.30, the opportunity was embraced for a short season of prayer, for which the watch had been expectantly kept."

On the evening of a very full day at Bloemfontein, Isaac Sharp went with the Wesleyan minister, Mr. Scott, to the chapel. The service began in the usual manner. Afterwards, Mr. Scott spoke of the Friends' visit to South Africa as "a visit of Christian love, not to their own people, but to the churches, mission stations, schools, etc." He alluded to a parallel in the Acts of the Apostles, and then said, "Brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation, say on." He then left the pulpit, on entering which, Isaac Sharp requested a time of silent waiting upon God. This was responded to, and followed by prayer and an open time of testimony. "I believe," says he, "it proved to be a time of refreshment, encouragement, and warning," and then he quotes the verse:

“ Oh, if one soul from Anwoth
Meet me at God's right hand ;
My heaven will be two heavens,
In Immanuel's Land.”

In the month of November, a halt was made one night on the bank of the Caledon river. The weather is suggestively described as being “howlish.” The grass was damp, the searching wind made the canvas rattle, and the moonlight came through watery clouds. The next day Isaac Sharp found “head, nose, teeth, and throat on the demonstrative side” and was “compelled to surrender ; severe pain and loss of strength followed, necessitating some days of rest at Leribe.”

When at Morija and in the largest place of worship in Basutoland, the Friends encountered the thunderstorm to which allusion was made in Chapter I. Dr. Casalis was standing by Isaac Sharp's side and acting as interpreter, but as in a short time their voices could not be heard, he said, “We had better cease for a little while.” The storm overhead became terrific, flash and crash followed each other with great rapidity.

Langley Kitching writes : “Very curiously it occurred to me that Isaac Sharp's bald head offered an attraction to the lightning. I never thought of anyone else, and I thought how sad it would be if he were struck down and killed in this manner ; I breathed a short prayer that it might not be so. Isaac Sharp was then saying, ‘Suffer the little children to come unto Me,’ etc., when the noise of the storm became so deafening that nothing but the thunder and rain could be heard, and the preacher and interpreter sat down together. Just at that moment a terrific crash burst over the building, and I was struck to the ground. I felt as though a kind of elastic heavy weight had fallen upon my head. The lightning also passed through my loins, down my legs, and out at my feet, throwing them up.”

Langley Kitching was not the only sufferer. Near him sat Mrs. Dyke, the wife of the senior missionary, and at her

left was the vestry wall, at the window of which the electric fluid struck, splintering it and drawing out the nails. The fire flashed over her, and severely scorched her. The wife of Dr. Casalis was quite paralysed and unable to move. From her, the lightning went to the lovely sleeping child at her side, who gave one little gasp and ceased to breathe. "The light of the little earthen lamp went out," writes Isaac Sharp, "to shine, ever the brighter, in eternal day." About seven hundred persons were in the chapel, and whilst the missionaries were in the vestry, attending to those who had been injured, several Basutos offered heart-felt prayer that the warning voice might speak to all. Express messengers were sent on horseback, travelling on through the night, to the nearer mission stations, in the sure knowledge that the claims of brotherly sympathy would be met.

By the bedside of Mrs. Dyke many prayers were put up. "As life trembled in the balance," says Isaac Sharp, "we were made sensible in whose hand the balance was held, whilst our suffering friend was able, with lowly quiet trust in her Saviour to testify 'all is well.'"

Langley Kitching was at the breakfast table on the following morning, though his head still needed rest. Mr. Dyke gave thanks to the Lord for sending his messengers at such a time. At 3 p.m. the little coffin was followed to the grave. The mission stations of Leribe and Berea were represented at the funeral—the result of hard travelling.

Mrs. Dyke so far recovered as to be able to breakfast with the Friends on the day of their departure.

Isaac Sharp had been much interested in attending a meeting of the Morija Bible Class. After he had addressed them and engaged in prayer one of the elders said: "The power of God has been manifested. Before conversion we were thieves. Before the missionaries came, we had no eyes to see anything. From the first missionaries I stole three sheep. Now, thanks be to the Lord, I who was once a thief am a child of God."

One of the members named Zephaniah offered prayer : "Lord, our heavenly Father, bless for our souls the words of thy servant ; write them on our hearts. Lord Jesus bless the words as living words for days to come, so that the blessing and teaching of the spirit may remain. O Lord, journey with Thy servants and keep them in safety, and strengthen them, and strengthen the animals that carry them. Prepare, by Thy Spirit, prepare the hearts of the people to receive."

As the Friends diligently pursued their labours, the last day of 1878 found them at Wittebergen, a Wesleyan Mission Station. Between 9 and 10 p.m. the native congregation assembled in the chapel for the Watch Night, and sang hymns vigorously. A clergyman who was present spoke well to them. Mr. Giddy, the Wesleyan missionary, also addressed them ; he had laboured in Africa for forty-four years without once going *home*. Isaac Sharp asked for a short time of silent waiting upon God, and thankfully believed that this was fulfilled in spirit as it certainly was in the letter. He then spoke at some length and was surprised to find on sitting down that only ten minutes of the old year remained.

When at the Moravian Mission Station of Shiloh, in a little meeting in the dining-room, Mr. Weir spoke of the gladness with which Isaac Sharp was welcomed :

"His name has been long familiar to us in connection with Greenland and Labrador. He is no stranger, and we feel that we are one in the same Lord. We give our hearty thanks to the Society from whom he comes, and for the exhortation and loving words which we have heard. In this distant field of labour the weeds sometimes threaten to overspread all, the tares grow so fast ; so this visit is an encouragement." It was also said that it would be a "lasting remembrance."

At the close of a meeting at Philipton, an old man, an elder of the Church, arose and said :

"I am thankful for your coming here, and that in the providence of God a visit like that of Backhouse and Walker is now being paid, a visit I well remember. I am reminded of the Scripture account of the sending forth of Paul and Barnabas."

Again and again, as the Friends went from place to place, they met with those who had loving memories of James Backhouse and George Washington Walker, who had spent about four years in ministerial labours in South Africa.

When describing a meeting at Tidmanton, Isaac Sharp says : "There was a great stillness. Before rising to speak I felt very powerless and empty, but tongue and utterance were mercifully given with a sense of Divine power over all. The voice of the native interpreter was powerful, and the roll of his full-toned Kaffir language thrilling."

A Wesleyan District Meeting was attended by the Friends. The meeting was begun in the usual manner. "I asked," says Isaac Sharp, "for a time of silent waiting on the Lord, and soon after rose with the words, 'It is good for me to draw near to God.' Christ, the Head of the Church the world over, is the Head of every individual member of it who is living in subjection to Him ; in all we do, *the more we seek the glory of God the greater will the blessing be,*" etc. Isaac Sharp's faithful manner of acting out his own deep convictions with regard to worship and ministry recall the sacred words, "Them that honour ME, I will honour."

He realised that "worship in spirit and in truth," in its intense reality, *cannot* rest on any outward form. Christ must have the pre-eminence. His voice must be listened for before the voice of man. The true worship cannot be performed by proxy. Each worshipper must draw nigh unto God, through Christ the "Merciful and faithful High Priest." The ministry of the Word must be under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Christ must choose, prepare,

qualify, and put forth His ministers. For every service there must be a fresh anointing, since God alone knows the inmost needs of the hearers, and He alone can give the soul-reaching message ; " it is the Spirit that quickeneth."

After Isaac Sharp had engaged in prayer and taken his seat, an aged brother gave thanks for the visit, and commended the Friends to the Lord for their further journeying. Then with heartfelt good-will the farewells were spoken. " We shook hands all round," says Isaac Sharp, " the glow of Christian love the while binding us together."

As Archbishop Trench writes :

" One life Divine,
Thro' all the branches of the mystic vine,
Flows ever."

In the South African *Christian Express* we find the following passage, in an appreciative notice : " The Society of Friends have twice done good service to religion in South Africa, by sending deputations of the ripest and richest souls among them to visit our churches and encourage our often lonely and uncheered workers. This good practice is as old as the days of the apostles."

The Conference of the French Missions in South Africa sent a letter to the London Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends, a few lines from which we quote : . . . " Amongst instances of God's goodness and mercy, with joy we call to mind a refreshing visit which was paid to each of our stations in Basutoland in 1878 by your deputation, the venerable Isaac Sharp and the dear friend Langley Kitching. We needed the visit to revive us. The Lord has seen our need, and He has inclined the hearts of these Friends to come to us.

" We have heard many words of loving encouragement from their lips, and we have held sweet counsel together, concerning the things pertaining to the kingdom of our dear Lord and Master. And together we have waited upon God, and felt His presence to be with us to bless us ; thus our hearts were strengthened and made glad. Also, many

of the native people around us have listened to the exhortations of the Friends with gladness, and we must believe with benefit to their souls."

In a letter Isaac Sharp remarks: "The visit to the French Mission Stations was singularly interesting. Love to Christ their mainspring and, as an outcome, love to souls and love one to another, in the Lord their King."

In February, 1879, when writing to his sister he says: "We are here in troublous times, but through Divine favour, fear has no place with me for the 'arrow' or 'pestilence' or for the mighty deep. All is well, and I have a humble but lively trust that through grace it will be well. 'To God only wise be glory through Jesus Christ for ever.' What a blessing it is to feel so well and strong again with no less vitality, I think, than on the day I left home. L.'s suggestion of possible curtailment raises a smile. No, not while body and soul hold together with my present power to 'rough it,' always presuming a clear vision, and ability mercifully granted for its utterance."

At another time he writes: "Not a shade of doubt rests on the long tarriance in this wonderful land. The sustaining power and grace of the Lord Jesus is near and precious, to whom be the praise now and for ever."

"Ask and ye shall receive." As we turn over the leaves of one volume of the African Journal we read: "Rose between six and seven; a time of earnest wrestling for a renewal of spiritual strength for the day."

When writing to Isaac Brown he mentions the interesting circumstance that in the south of Basuto Land in a time of trial, scattering and war, a little band of faithful women, native evangelists, went from kraal to kraal to tell of the love of their Saviour, and to seek to win souls to Him.

After varied experiences of travel and service—some of which might well tax the strength and nerves of even the young and strong—the Friends' gospel labours in Africa drew to a close.

It was on the 17th of May, 1879, that they sailed from Durban for Madagascar. "We saw," writes Isaac Sharp, "with a sense of peaceful rest and thanksgiving the shores of South Africa fading in the dim distance. The *May Queen* had been ready for some days, and only waited the lowering of the surf on the bar to get away. I rejoice to number it among the many providences of this remarkable journey, that so soon as the bar was ready we were ready too."

The Friends landed at Port Louis, Mauritius, on the 27th, and reached Tamatave, Madagascar, on the 6th of June.

How like Isaac Sharp it was, to send the following lines to the captain of the vessel he had just left :

"To Captain C. of the S.— H.— in remembrance of Mauritius and Madagascar :—

By land or sea,
In whatsoever clime,
The wise are they
Who watch and pray ;
And day by day,
Through Christ the way
Live for *Eternity*
As well as *time*.

Isaac Sharp."

This verse was accompanied by a note :

"Dear Captain C.—Soon we shall part, whether to meet again on earth we cannot tell, but there will be a solemn day of meeting. . . . Time is short, we know not how short, and it is written, 'Prepare to meet thy God.'

"Thou and I have both escaped the jaws of death, but we are both nearer death now than we were then. For great sinners, a great Saviour is provided or I had not been here to tell of His love, and to give thee a heartfelt entreaty to make the full surrender of thy *all* to Him who shed His blood for thee and would have thee live to His glory. In answer to prayer may the seal of pardon and peace be thine, through faith in the Son of God.

"Sincerely thy friend,

"ISAAC SHARP."

CHAPTER X.

"I could tell much, and leave much untold, of the way and work of the Lord, but time would fail."

Letter of Isaac Sharp.

"Let not faithless fears o'ertake us,
Let not faith and hope forsake us.

* * * *

Heavenly Leader, still direct us,
Still support, console, protect us."

Count Zinzendorf.

"I AM happy in my work," wrote Isaac Sharp from Madagascar, "notwithstanding that which pertains to the service whereunto my hand is set.

"Wherever the light is strong, deep shadows are sure to be, and who would have it otherwise. . . . As in our land so here, there is too much of a superficial Christianity. Nevertheless, I believe if the time of testing came again, some would be found more ready to die than to deny their Lord."

On the 28th of June, the Friends reached the capital, Antananarivo, where they had a hearty welcome from the Friends who were then in the city, and also from several of the missionaries of the London Missionary Society.

In after years, a missionary of another denomination remarked that this visit to the capital was a most timely one, and from personal experience this missionary spoke of the wonderful influence and cheer brought about by Isaac Sharp's presence.

In accomplishing the journey up from the coast, the Friends had an altogether new experience in palanquin travel over hill and dale. Isaac Sharp's description of this makes it easy to understand that "nerves should be in

abeyance for the enjoyment of such a journey." Steep gradients were ascended and descended over slippery clay, whilst the bearers with wonderful agility pushed onward over places that looked, at first, impassable, the palanquin meanwhile swaying to and fro.

"Our travel," he writes, "lay among miles of rounded hill country. The Roofia palm and travellers' tree still graced our pathway, and the light green of the slender bamboos with their pendant terminal plumes, was in beautiful contrast with the dark foliage of the forest trees.

. . . Deep water-worn fissures, very narrow at the bottom, were just sufficient for the palanquins to pass between perpendicular sides ten to twenty feet high, tortuous in their course and steep as a house roof. Moreover, the pathway was of clay, soft and slippery from recent rains."

"Once," says Isaac Sharp, "I soliloquised involuntarily as the bearers were about to descend a terrific steep, 'Is it really practicable?'"

But at last Antananarivo, in the middle of Madagascar is reached, and he writes, "Peaceful, thankful, and restful, rejoicing in spirit to be here. Bless the Lord, O my soul. Helen Gilpin kindly invited us to tea, and we partook with much enjoyment of a genuine, social, home-like English meal." On the afternoon of the following day a company of about one hundred men and women, dressed in clean white lambas arrived. One spoke on behalf of the rest to welcome the Friends, and to ask their acceptance of a gift of poultry and fruit. They spoke affectionately of Joseph Sewell—the first English Friend who was a missionary in their land, and asked after him.

"He loved you before he saw you," was the answer, "and much more afterwards."

"We are his children," they said.

One of the Friend missionaries, Samuel Clemes, acted as interpreter. His medical help was highly valued by suffering natives—men, women, and children; he seemed

to possess the power of helping them by a sort of intuition.

One morning the Friends had a meeting at Analakeley, with nearly 2,000 native preachers, evangelists, and teachers, a large portion of whom were representative men. In Isaac Sharp's address he reminded them of Rasalama and her martyrdom. He spoke of how Joseph Sewell's mind had been impressed, in boyhood, when his mother told him the thrilling tale. This meeting lasted for six hours, but very few left their seats. A forest of hands was upheld for a loving message to Joseph S. Sewell.

Seventeen years later Joseph Sewell's beloved daughter, Lucy Johnson, her husband, and little girl—"Blossom"—have won the martyr's crown. God, in His great goodness, has given faith to their fellow-workers to trust Madagascar to Him in the midst of darkest clouds.

"As I stood on the spot of the martyrdom," said one of them, Henry E. Clark, "the words arose in my heart with power, 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone. *But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*'"

One evening the sun set as the travellers reached the hamlet for which they were bound, and in the gloaming a vigorous search was made from house to house to find the one the least filthy.

Can we marvel at the prevailing Malagasy fever?

When their efforts were crowned by success, they were not surprised at finding a large population of fleas, as sheep, pigs, poultry, to say nothing of rats, went in and out at will. A space of seven feet square for the night did not give much room for three stretchers.

"We did our best," characteristically writes Isaac Sharp, "and the lights were soon extinguished. Then began a sort of revelry among the rats. Down came one, flop, on my bed, followed by another in too near proximity to my face to be comfortable, so a candle was lit, and then

ensued a general scramble. There was much loose straw in the place, so covering over my head for protection, I once more put out the light, and very soon 'tired nature's sweet restorer' came to the rescue." It could not have been pleasant on another occasion after asking :

"Are there any rats?" to get the answer :

"Yes, many ; very many."

If less unpleasant, more perilous were the experiences, thus described, of seeking a halting place : "The shades of the evening came on. Clouds were over and around us, and there was no moonlight to mingle with the day's decline. The darkness, to an unpractised eye, became impenetrable. How the palanquin bearers groped along was a marvel and a mystery ; threading their way like cats—minus cat's eyes for the threading—too dark to see whether the next step would drop six inches or sixteen. Two of them, therefore, went in front to 'feel the way.' The climax was at hand. We came to a ridge, with a broken, uneven, and rapid descent—on one side a chasm, on the other a deep ditch—and between them our path lay, two feet in width, over which as best they could our heroes descended in the darkness, passing safely with their living freight into the valley, and thence up a steep ascent to Ambohimatra."

When visiting the village of Bara, Isaac Sharp felt the darkness of heathendom—the "gross darkness"—to be so great as to appear almost impenetrable. He wished to direct the thoughts of his hearers from earthly to heavenly possessions.

"Though a man have plenty of rice to eat," he said, "and plenty of lambas to wear, and plenty of oxen, there are heavenly possessions better than these." The people laughed outright.

"How can a spirit have possessions? Is the spirit you speak of flesh, or blood, or life?"

"The simplest things are too hard for them," said Mr. Baron of the L.M.S. "Tell them what the Bible says,

they have yet to learn what the Bible is. Jesus they know not even by name." Isaac Sharp was thankful that a teacher had come to live amongst them. "This journey," he writes, "helps me to realise more fully than ever before, the darkness of the heathen who know not God."

Early in September, William Johnson arrived from Zanzibar, where he had gone to accompany his wife and little ones on their way to a visit to England. Warm was the welcome that awaited his return. That of Henry E. Clark and his wife was looked forward to with longing expectancy.

Soon after Isaac Sharp reached Madagascar he wrote : "The tropical vegetation even at this season was beautiful to look upon, and the flowers, here and there, told by foreshadowing of the glory yet to be ; a figure of delight, as I thought of those I love on their way to untold blossoming in the Paradise above."

In a letter to Australasia he says : " My friends at home would be glad to know that Madagascar were already past. But what if the Master wills it otherwise ? There is safety in His blessed keeping for life or death ; I do not expect the latter just yet, although in my seventy-fourth year, and with a touching knowledge that at home the autumn leaves are falling thick and fast."

Henry E. Clark kindly sends the following details of the visit to Madagascar : " On our return from England to Antananarivo I soon found that Isaac Sharp's visit was in every way a success. He was very warmly received by the members of the London Missionary Society and he visited nearly all their stations. In their report for 1879 they say : ' We record with pleasure and thankfulness the visit of Mr. Isaac Sharp and Mr. Langley Kitching as an event which we trust will be attended with lasting good to the churches in Madagascar, and which we are sure will be long remembered both by the missionaries and the native Christians. Their frequent meetings with the missionaries of the Friends' Mission and the L.M.S., their numerous

visits to the congregations and schools in town and country, and the many addresses full of Christian experience and wise counsel, cannot but have produced a deep and salutary impression.' And again they say : ' Mr. Sharp's wise counsel and matured advice were much appreciated by the natives, and we feel sure must have left a most favourable impression on their minds.'

" Mr. Brockway, of the same mission, writes : ' Evidently taught by the Spirit of God, Mr. Sharp warned, exhorted, and encouraged, as only one taught of the Master and having largely His spirit could do. The bread cast upon these waters will, I believe, bear fruit now and after many days.'

" He visited nearly all the mission stations and was received most warmly. One of their mission remarked to the writer : ' Mr. Sharp is a Friend.'

William Johnson thus wrote of a visit Isaac Sharp paid to a district directly under his care : " The people were delighted, and one of them, describing to me his address, told how it took hold of them and went home to their hearts. That one of his years should come so far in the love of Christ to see and help them, touches a chord in their hearts and obtains a response to the message he brings."

Henry Clark tells us that whilst at Antananarivo, Isaac Sharp arranged to give a lecture on " Northern Lands and People " to the Young Men's Christian Association. Just then there was great excitement in the capital respecting slavery, the people having great fears that it was going to be done away with. Somehow a rumour got about that Isaac Sharp was going to speak against slavery in his lecture, and that the opportunity was going to be seized for an anti-slavery demonstration. A deputation from the Y.M.C.A. called on him.

" We are afraid of getting into trouble if you speak of slavery. We all ask you to pledge yourself to say nothing about it."

"Certainly not," was the reply.

"What are you going to say in your lecture?"

"I have not told my friends with whom I sit at table, why should I tell you? I can give no pledge as to what I shall say, but if any of you are absent you will be sorry for it."

"Well then, we throw ourselves on your mercy." They smiled when he answered that he should regret even a hair of their head being hurt. The Prime Minister sent a message to Henry Clark who was to be chairman, and Mr. Cousins of the L. M. S. to say that he should hold them responsible for the good order of the meeting, as everyone knew that if anything were said against slavery the meeting would be broken up in confusion. About 1,200 assembled to hear the lecture, and warm thanks were tendered for it. No direct allusion to slavery was made. Afterwards it was said in the capital, "Mr Sharp is a clever man. He has made us all think about slavery, and yet he has never mentioned the subject at all."

"I never saw Isaac Sharp until I met him in Madagascar," remarks Henry Clark; "I very much enjoyed my intercourse with him, and after he left I had many a kind loving letter from him. It will be one of the joys of heaven to meet him there."

When meeting the congregation at Ambohitantale for the last time, one of the members spoke on its behalf: "In seeing you we almost seem to see Mr. Sewell. *We are his children*, and we thank him for what he did." Then, pointing to some of those who were present, he added: "Here are Mr. Sewell's children, and here are the old men that laboured with him."

"If my voice," said Isaac Sharp, "could reach Joseph Sewell to-day with your loving message, and bring an answer back, I think that answer would be, 'I have no greater joy than that my children walk in truth'; and my heart goes with this as I bid you all farewell in the Lord."

To his delight and surprise one day after an attack of illness, when "still among the feeble folk but slowly improving," he heard the news, "The letters are come." "After tea I settled down," he says, "and spent two hours straight away in their perusal. Light and shade; bright gleams with broad shadows here and there, came with thrill of joy and sadness strangely blended. But what an enjoyment are these little silent messengers in their revelations, one by one. Truly as cold water is to a thirsty soul so is good news from a far country."

Whilst in Madagascar, and at the close of his visit to the district more especially under the care of the Friends' Foreign Mission Association, he wrote: "As at home for more than two centuries, Friends in a quiet way and by the force of Christian principle have been in some degree the honoured instruments for moulding the public mind in things civil and religious, so I thankfully believe a place and power has been, and is, exercised in this land for good by 'our own people.'"

"This deeply interesting visit intensifies the conviction of years, that the value and blessing pertaining to the mission work of Friends in this and other lands—nor to mission work alone—will be very much in proportion to the faithfulness with which the Christian doctrine and practice of the Society of Friends is maintained.

"Not very long ago an eminent and influential preacher and teacher signified his conviction that the Church of Christ is not prepared to part with the Society of Friends, nor with the influence which as a religious body they have beyond all others the power to diffuse; a Society entrusted by the Lord, as I believe, with a deeply responsible stewardship, to uphold before the world the simplicity of the New Testament teaching; to bear witness to the government and guidance of the Holy Spirit and to the blessed fulness and spirituality of the gospel of our Lord and Redeemer."

In November, 1879, in consequence of failing health, Langley Kitching had to return to England, and although it was no small trial to Isaac Sharp to part with his kind companion, he believed that his decision was a right one.

During his stay there, Isaac Sharp wrote an address to the Queen of Madagascar, chiefly on the subject of slavery, which concludes as follows :

“The Africans can no longer be lawfully sold, and the time may be approaching when the righteous act of setting them free may have prepared the way for another step; and when the Lord shall put it into the heart of the Queen to see it right to take that step, let her not fear, though it should be to declare every child born after a certain date absolutely free; also to set a fixed sum as the limit price of freedom, by the payment of which any man, woman, or child may be redeemed. . . . If the limit price be subject to a reduction every year, the way would be gradually prepared for the duties and privileges of freedom. Education, meanwhile, would do its noble work, the cause of religion would be advanced, and labour, freed from degradation, would rise in the esteem of the people as in other Christian lands.

“May the Lord hasten it in His own time, incline the heart of the Queen thereto, grant her length of days for its fulfilment, and enable the Prime Minister to unite therein to the glory of God and the advancement of the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

“(Signed) ISAAC SHARP.”

Once whilst travelling in a region where the savage tribes would not yield to the Hova Government, during a halt, as he sat apart from his company, he saw some natives stealthily coming towards him, pointing their arms against his party. He did not move, but took care to let them see that he was unarmed. Then they came out from their con-

cealment, and he looked up and smiled, that "wonderfully attractive smile" of his. The natives now lowered their weapons. Murder and plunder were no longer to be thought of, and the travellers went on their way unharmed.

At a much later date, he says : "There comes to my remembrance a little illustrative incident in Madagascar, when one poor woman, having left the paths of heathendom proper, thought she was getting on pretty well in her Christianity, for, in her former condition, she used to steal chickens, but now she only stole eggs !!"

It was not until June, 1880, that he found himself ready to leave the shores of Madagascar. He sailed for Bourbon in the *Venus*, on board which no one beside himself could speak English. He says : "For fourteen days and nights the vessel was beating up against a head wind, the breeze now and then freshening to a gale. My cabin was within three feet of the hold, with a cargo below of live pigs and geese ; and when the cackle, cackle, squeak, and grunt blended at full blast in one united chorus, whether by night or day, there was for the time being but slender appreciation of the axiom, 'discord is harmony not understood !' Neither does the olfactory memory of those days and nights come back with a waft of fragrance."

From Mauritius he writes to Henry Clark : "Alone, yet not alone. I am so blessed as to be easy in mind, and of a good heart, hopeful and expectant, able through Divine grace to say, 'My heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.'"

He had concluded an earlier letter to the London Committee with the words : "Not a few of my beloved Friends will, I believe, remember an aged pilgrim in his far-off journeying, and may they be permitted to realise for him and for themselves that in height and depth there is safety in the keeping of the Lord, for He is good—yea, good to all—to whom in simple faith we may commit our all, for He reigneth over all, blessed for ever."

It was on the 17th of August, 1880, that the steamship *Glenelg* came to her moorings at Sydney, and almost at the same moment the solitary traveller was welcomed by his friend Joseph James Neave. "As he rowed me away in the moonlight," says Isaac Sharp, "the bells from a tower in the city were borne over the water in the evening stillness with a clear and softened sound." He was interested in meeting at Sydney with an old man in his ninety-sixth year, blind but mentally quite clear. He was one of the survivors of Waterloo.

With his new companion and fellow labourer Joseph James Neave, Isaac Sharp was actively engaged in religious service until the time of the Annual Meeting of the Society of Friends at Melbourne. He alludes to quoting George Fox's words, "Friends, hold all your meetings in the power of God"; and also tells us of a conversation in the Melbourne Coffee Rooms: "E. D. conversed freely and spoke wisely on the need of Friends *holding their own* and not letting in the comprehensive but delusive idea, that if only in Christ Jesus there is no need of distinction."

No doubt Isaac Sharp felt such a view to be perfectly consistent with the prayer:

"Confer the grace unknown,
The mystic Charity;
As Thou art with the Father One,
Unite us all in Thee."

The Friends paid a large number of visits to scattered families and individuals, and also went to some Moravian Mission Stations. From Mr. Hagenauer they were glad to learn that the children of the Aborigines have sometimes shown remarkable quickness for learning.

In the South Australian diary we find the following, which in a few words tells much: "My valued companion, for my sake, shrank exceedingly from the mountain pass; but as the way felt clear to me, I ventured to accept the responsibility involved in going forward."

Tasmania was reached in due time and the Annual Meeting at Hobart Town attended, and described as a time of comfort and refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

Writing thence to an English Friend, Isaac Sharp says : " This long and extensive journey is of necessity a costly one. *Measured by money value*, I should faint and fail. But, '*Is it right?*' On this wise I dare feel strong, and rejoice in the upholding of the Church by prayer, sympathy and manifest tokens of blessing."

At Peppermint Bay, a clergyman of the Church of England most kindly made way for the Friends to have a meeting in his schoolroom.

Isaac Sharp did not find it difficult to attract children, and writes of a large family at a farm he visited : " The youngest sat on my knee, a fine boy under two years old. I do not know his name, but it might have been Zed (Z or last), for he is the twenty-sixth."

In one household he wrote the following lines :

What shall I say
This New Year's day
Of one thousand eight hundred and eighty-two ?
What must I say,
What must I pray,
My children—for each and all of you ?

This would I say
This New Year's day,
Whole-hearted and true be ye each to the other ;
Let cords of love,
Woven above,
Bind brother to sister, and sister to brother.

Father of all !
May they hear Thy call,
And the children's children whom Thou hast given.
Through Thine only Son
In Him be they one,
With blessings on earth and meetness for heaven.

On the occasion of a marriage he wrote a short piece, which begins thus :

This is the day which the Lord hath made,*
We will be glad and rejoice in it ;
Broad lights are His, and the shadows, too.
O bridegroom, O bride, to Him be true,
While each to the other closely knit
In sunshine and shadow, in light and shade.

A few days were spent at Melbourne, and a month at Adelaide and the neighbourhood. Then came three months of varied religious labour and some perilous travelling with J. J. Neave in Queensland. They had been warned to avoid tropical heat, but no one had told them to beware of tropical cold and they were much struck with the contrast between day and night temperature. At Brisbane, the Baptist minister not only kindly lent his chapel, but, under peculiar circumstances, gave up his own appointment on a Sunday evening in favour of the Friends.

"Will you have any singing?" he asked, and on receiving a negative reply responded, "All right." He afterwards spoke heartily of his satisfaction with the meeting. Isaac Sharp feared that in congregational hymn singing people too often take on their lips words which do not truly express their condition of heart, and that this unreality in worship has a deadening effect on the spiritual life.

A rough voyage in the *Albion* steamship brought the travellers to New Zealand in March, 1882. Here they found an open door for service. Whilst speaking in the Presbyterian Church, at Invercargill, Isaac Sharp says: "The yearning of years for Invercargill was vividly before me, and an answer to that yearning appeared to present in the kindness of our reception and in the crowded assembly before us." One night when 3,000 feet above the sea, the Friends had to spend many hours in a coach set fast in the snow. "Shiver answered to shiver," says Isaac Sharp, "as hour after hour of that memorable night wore away." He

* Psalm cxviii. 24.

records a call on Mr. Gray, a Wesleyan minister, at Balclutha. The subject of silence as a part of worship had come up. I ventured to say :

"It is a marvel to me that our Wesleyan brethren who own and value the silence of the 'Watch-night' should be content with *once a year*."

"*Once a month*," said Mr. Gray, "we have a short silence." Isaac Sharp heartily approved of this as a step in the right direction.

On his seventy-sixth birthday he alludes to a prayer of his fellow labourer that "*in the Lord's own time* we might be with our loved ones at home once more in peace." At a later date he says : "We have been closely banded together in service for our Lord the greater part of the two years last past." In December, however, the time for parting came, "after a precious season of united prayer, fellowship, and communion of spirit one with the other and with the Lord—mindful alike of mercies past and present, and with a graciously granted renewal of trust for the time to come. . . . Thus I am setting out for a journey of nearly 6,000 miles, 'alone yet not alone.' There was a precious sense permitted me of thankfulness and peace as the shores of New Zealand gently faded away."

In September, 1897, Joseph James Neave writes as follows, in a letter from Sydney, N.S.W. : "From my earliest days, and long before I knew him, I was familiar with the name of Isaac Sharp, for he occasionally went, with other young men who were also living in the employ of Day and Robson at Saffron Walden, to my grandfather's to tea, he being a farmer a few miles away. This was before my mother's marriage, but she used to speak of him. I feel it to be one of the greatest privileges of my life to have known dear Isaac Sharp, and to have been yoked with him in religious service for the best part of two years in these Australasian Colonies. His uniform brightness and cheerfulness, sometimes under trying circumstances, were very helpful and instructive, and told

more plainly than words the source of his strength. The ability to mingle with almost all kinds of people in a helpful, pleasant manner, that commended the Gospel of Christ, was a gift that he often used, and by which many were attracted.

"I have been with him when his physical and mental powers have been sorely taxed, but I never saw his spirit perceptibly affected thereby. He was emphatically a son of consolation. His private and public ministry seemed full of it. As one anointed ever with fresh oil, he poured forth of his unfailing treasure to the help of many weary and faint ones, as his Master bade and helped him. After we had completed the service in Australia and Tasmania, we left Melbourne for the Bluff, New Zealand, early in 1882, calling on the way for a few hours on our dear friends in Hobart. We left the house of Robert A. Mather after dark to go on board the steamer that night. In doing so Isaac Sharp caught his foot and fell heavily, causing several sprains and bruises. I think this affected his general health, for all the time we were in New Zealand he was often ailing, sometimes really ill, but as often recovering and taking his part in the service of the day. He rested a short time with our friends Thomas and Jane Mason. . . . We paid a most interesting visit to our dear friends Thomas and Ann F. Jackson and their family, at Otonga, when they were having a very rough and trying experience, and the roads were almost impassable. Fletcher Jackson met us at the railway station, putting Isaac Sharp on one horse, and the luggage on another, which he led, leaving me to pick my way. It took us nearly seven hours to go about eight or ten miles to their house, and we did our best to get along. Here our friends learned severe lessons that have helped to fit them for their important and helpful service in the cause of Christ in these Colonies.

"I might mention that when we first landed at the Bluff, Isaac Sharp felt he ought to go to Stewart Island, the most southerly of the New Zealand group. We went in an

oyster cutter, in a few hours, and found a settlement of homely people, mostly fishermen. We found William Peterson, the schoolmaster, a pious man, who said he felt we had been sent in answer to prayer. We gathered the people together and had times of refreshing and blessing, both in public and private, among them. I have been to the island twice since then, and on each occasion found Isaac Sharp warmly remembered and spoken of, and a *very* open door for the Gospel message. A real work of grace has been going on with many, so that one's heart rejoices. About seven or eight religious denominations are found in the meetings, while the isles to the north of Scotland, with each of the home united kingdoms, and Germany, Norway, and Sweden, are, I think, represented."

Joseph James Neave felt so much concerned at Isaac Sharp's frail state of health that he had fully intended to undertake the voyage to San Francisco with him, but he had no relapse, and was so bright and cheerful that there seemed to be nothing to make it unsafe for him to undertake the voyage alone. "It seems to me," adds Joseph J. Neave, "as if power were given him to rise above all physical ailments and hold them in abeyance."

A lady who had an interview with him wrote afterwards: "The real value of the visit cannot be told, as it lay in his sympathetic understanding of my loss and sorrow, and of the perplexities of the way. He seemed like a prophet of old in knowing how to comfort. I believe his reply to a remark about coveting his strong faith, was to the effect that his faith only came day by day. What struck me much was the joyous laugh that came spontaneously with his serious talk."

Of his arrival in the States, he writes: "It was near sundown when the steamer reached the quay at San Francisco, and then in the joy of vigorous health it was my privilege to set foot for the first time on the shores of the United States, even as I saw in vision long years ago, *landing in the west from the Pacific.*"

CHAPTER XI.

“ Never a heart-ache, and never a groan,
Never a tear-drop, and never a moan,
Never a danger, but there on the throne,
Moment by moment, Christ thinks of His own.”

Miss W. Whittle.

“ The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord.”

DURING his voyage Isaac Sharp wrote to his “beloved friend” Harrison Penney : “Let this be thy consolation and thy joy with thanksgiving, that for thee and me, and for all the dear children of the Lord everywhere, as they abide in Him, that with all the sands of time yet to run—be they many or few—with each grain will be given, in untold love and mercy, a grain of grace, whether it be the grace of endurance or the grace of triumph. . . . I well remember calling on the late John Fothergill in his last illness, when, in the the dawning light of an eternal day, earth’s lesser lights were paling. He had had two other calls that day. In one, he had been reminded of a glorious career to look back upon in an honourable calling. In the other, two women Friends had ministered to him in a few words fitly spoken, ‘like apples of gold in pictures of silver.’ In the first caller’s reminder, he could see little to glory in. In the second were words of life.” Then, after alluding to some deaths in England, he writes of the “cause to mark well with each opened grave the clarion note, ‘Work while it is day.’ . . . I inwardly crave

the prosperity of Zion and that the children of Zion may be *joyful in their King*."

In a letter to a niece he sends cordial thanks for any unanswered letters, and adds the wise words, "I dare not dip *too deeply* into midnight oil, lest the service of the sanctuary should be imperilled. . . . When I think of my eight nephews and nieces all following in the educational wake of their father and mother, and of the influence for good which may descend through them, I am glad of heart that spheres of so much usefulness have opened up for them, on which I crave a rich blessing may abundantly rest."

It was a cheer and strength to Isaac Sharp to be met at San Francisco by Joel Bean, a minister of the Society of Friends, and to find that he could for a while join him in his travels and religious engagements, although until he met Isaac Sharp he was not aware that he would reach the shores of America without a companion. It was now the autumn of 1882, and together the Friends crossed the Continent to attend the Yearly Meeting at Baltimore, visiting meetings in many other states during the succeeding months. Their home whilst at Baltimore was at the house of the late Deborah C. Thomas, many members of whose family resided with her. Other guests were also entertained in that hospitable home. Joel Bean writes: "It was a rare company that surrounded the long table where conversation earnest and sprightly gave zest to every meal. But most vividly do I remember the Bible Readings and morning devotions, prayers on which our spirits were borne up to the throne of grace. Dr. R. H. Thomas has beautifully described his mother's prayers in one of his poems :

' Her prayers ; who'er has heard her pray,
Has known that one at least saw clear
Beyond the dimness of our day,
The limits of the now and here,
And pierced the veil, and saw the throne,
Where with strong wrestlings, and with tears,

She, making other's needs her own,
 And trembling with their sins and fears,—
 Sought for herself and them, the grace
 That answered to their utmost need ;
 Till those who heard her, felt the place
 To be the gate of heaven indeed.'

"In many circles like this, of high culture and spiritual tone, Isaac Sharp was the centre of attention and interest. He could adapt himself to very different varieties of outward condition. At Christmas time we were among the coloured people at Southland College in Arkansas. We spent several days in this large boarding school. They were delightful days, in which Isaac Sharp gave out freely from his stores to the great pleasure of pupils, teachers, and neighbours, and we were entertained in turn by them.

"Stories of the olden time among the coloured people of that region were told in a manner, and with powers of description truly wonderful. I will copy a specimen of one of the old plantation songs, but the effect of the tune, and the emotions stirred by it, would have to be seen and heard to be understood. It begins :

'Well, it's Jesus here, and it's Jesus there,
 An' it must be Jesus everywhere ;
 Jesus, Jesus died on the cross !

'Well, I lef my house and went abroad
 Singin and talkin about the Lord,
 Jesus, Jesus died on the cross !'

"We could see how readily the coloured people could be wrought upon to a high pitch of excitement by these old songs. . . . The evening closed with some remarks on the contrast which the purer worship 'in spirit and in truth' presents, and with encouragement to those who see beyond these things, to labour for the elevation of the standard among the people. Morris Brown, a minister, and Charles Wade have been led out of these excitements. . . . We became warmly attached to the family, and

the Friends composing the meeting in which there were three coloured ministers.

"At Friendsville, Maryville, and in the mountains of Tennessee, at Richsquare, Piney Woods, in North Carolina, in Philadelphia, New York, Providence, Rhode Island, in Chicago, Richmond, Cincinnati, Spiceland, in Iowa, and at Washington and other places, we had most interesting visits. In our long journeys Isaac Sharp was a most agreeable companion. With a richly stored and ready memory he had large resources to draw from, and a sunny nature to enliven the passing hours. Many were the sweet seasons of private devotion we had together. The strong conviction everywhere sustained him that he was pursuing the path of duty, made clear to his mental vision by the Holy Spirit. When in South Africa he had remarked in one of his letters : ' While, therefore, our tarriance in this land has far exceeded the limit mentally assigned, I do not see that we could have cut any visit short or have passed by any states hitherto visited, without a jar, or a cloud in the mental atmosphere. The watchword given me months before I left home has been wonderfully fulfilled, '*Behold I have set before thee an open door.*' "

This companionship was much valued by Isaac Sharp. In reference to his visits to the States, Charles Coffin writes : " As a minister his labours have been *very acceptable*. His friends at home may feel assured that he is now occupying a field of *great usefulness*."

"None could be in his presence," were the words of another, "whether socially or religiously engaged, without feeling that they were in the presence of a man of God, full of the spirit of Him who went about doing good." In his diary, Isaac Sharp alludes to a call on an old lady Friend of Cincinnati, who at the age of eighty-seven was remarkable for mental vigour. "Bless the Lord," was the beginning of her heartfelt greeting, in which she told of her joy in meeting with the Friend whose wanderings she had followed mentally for years with warm interest,

catching up every scrap of information she could about the journeys in the service of her Lord. "The moments passed quickly," he writes, "as with a lively mind, and out of a full heart her mouth spoke. Then came a sweet season together in commemorating the goodness and mercy of the Lord, and in the offering of prayer."

When describing an evening meeting in another place, he writes: "I did not like the *attempt* to squeeze out a hymn as one of the stranger ministers present said, 'If any one feels like it being laid on them to sing a hymn, it might gather our minds for worship before more come in'; to which remark there was not the slightest response. *Something* deeper was, I believe, already over the meeting. Phebe Hoyle knelt in prayer, then I spoke at some length, and Joel Bean offered prayer."

Whilst in North Carolina, Isaac Sharp became dangerously ill, and was nursed at the Friends' Boarding School at New Garden. The illness was the result of long travel with climatic changes, frequent exposure night and day, and "varied strength testing." How like him are the words: "Confined to the house, and chiefly to bed, there was cause for rejoicing of heart in having so comfortable a home providentially provided, with all needful care by night and day."

In the course of his travels a call on Whittier was much enjoyed. He asked the poet for his autograph. The latter went into another room, and when he handed back the book it contained the following singularly appropriate verses:

"A life of duty lends to all it sees,
The beauty of its thought;
And fairest forms and sweetest harmonies
Make glad its way unsought.

"In sweet accordancy of praise and love
The singing waters run;
And sunset mountains wear in light above
The smile of duty done.

“ Sure stands the promise ; ever to the meek
 A heritage is given ;
 Nor lose they earth who single-hearted seek
 The righteousness of heaven.

“ JOHN G. WHITTIER.”

“ In the extremes of Quakerdom, existing on this vast continent,” wrote Isaac Sharp, “ some of my friends well know I did not see in all things as they saw, nor they as I. Nevertheless, the words of my Norwegian Friend, Endre Dahl, well nigh half-a-century ago, have had their place and fulfilment again and again : ‘ There is a love which covers all.’ . . . From death to life, from the power of Satan to the power of Christ many have been gathered ; but in not a few instances—which I greatly deplore—silent waiting upon the Lord for the renewal of spiritual strength has given place to a ‘ service of song.’ Meanwhile, admission to membership in the Society of Friends has been on grounds superficial to a degree.” After contrasting this method with its opposite extreme, he adds, “ Nevertheless, wrong and wrong, however jostled together, never yet made right. Preachers and teachers, ‘ *the* pastor and the flock,’ together with the support of the ministry, claim a large share of consideration in this land, and these claims respectively are much pressed.

“ I think we read of *pastors* (plural) in the New Testament, but I do not call to mind ‘ *the* pastor ’ set over ‘ *the* flock ’ as such. The one-man element, so far as Friends are concerned, appears to me alien to the Headship of Christ and to the genius of New Testament Quakerism, whereunto subject may we ever be.

“ The Quakerism of this age has doubtless erred on the side of a non-aggressive policy. Now the pendulum is swaying right over to the other side in some parts of this land. . . . I do not say that in ‘ revival services ’ no hymns should be sung, but I have small sympathy with continuous singing, preaching, prayer, and praise, in recognised meetings of Friends, to the absolute exclusion of silence,

nor of commencing with a hymn and ending with the doxology and benediction, and the filling up of every available gap lest time should be lost.

"It is good to pray, and that without ceasing, but it is good also reverently to wait upon the Most High in an attitude of expectancy: 'I will hear what God the Lord will speak.'"

He did not omit a visit to Niagara, for although it was not his wont to go out of the way for sight-seeing, neither did he neglect what was well worth seeing when this could be done with no damage to the claims of duty. And no doubt there was wisdom in such relaxation, even where nature does not so loudly speak of Almighty power as in these stupendous falls:

"For if the ocean be as nought in the hollow of Thy Hand,
And the stars of the bright firmament in the balance grains
of sand.

If Niagara's rolling floods seem great to us who lowly bow;
Thou great Creator of the whole, how passing great art Thou!"*

In reference to his visit to the Indian Territory he observes: "It was refreshing to witness under the law of kindness a deep response on the part of the Modocs and other originally wild tribes; and an ingathering to the fold of the Good Shepherd. . . . Some of my friends may probably read with mingled surprise and interest of 'The Grand River Meeting of the Society of Friends in the Indian Territory.' . . . My call on Steamboat Frank was one of deep interest. He said:

"I saw Friends first in Philadelphia, and Asa Tuttle in 1878; he told us all about it, but said I, talk not to us, but to your own white people; they brought us away 200 miles. God will show you after, it is ours, not theirs, and they push us away; I was greatly discouraged. Then came we back to the agency. From white men came bad words, bad whiskey, and bad guns—wholly bad. They

* T. F. Buckingham.

took us to the cities in the East to make a show, and we not like it. I say this way : say it is wrong. So I asked for money to go back to Modoc camp ; it was refused, but we got it from Washington. At first there were of men, women, and children, 177 ; now it is 102 ; fever, chills, lung trouble, and the change altogether, makes this great number of deaths. So when I got back to Modoc camp I prayed to God and believed on my Father in heaven, and that what He thinks is best.

“ ‘ I prayed to God and the answer came : “ *It is not for ever.*” He answer me that. I was discouraged wonderful before He say that. Then I began to talk about Jesus to my people. Two, three, four years I talk about Jesus to my people. In 1880 I joined the Quaker Church.’ There was a deep pathos in all this.”

Mexico was afterwards visited, and in reference to the mission work there Isaac Sharp says : “ It is still the time of seed-sowing, of sowing in faith, looking unto Jesus, not without a trustful expectancy of a harvest by and by. An assured belief springs up the while that not in vain shall this labour be. With a loving and cordial sympathy for those who are thus engaged in Mexico and elsewhere, the words arise in their freshness, ‘ Be not weary in well-doing, for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not.’ ” Samuel A. Purdie, of the Friends’ Mexican Mission, was his companion.

They were exposed to much weariness and hardship in some of their journeyings as they passed over roads—if roads they could be called—very deep in mud. Sometimes they had to sleep in the open air, even when snow fell on Isaac Sharp’s face. The travellers feared to light a fire lest their whereabouts should be found out by the Mexican banditti, as they were prowling about hither and thither.

It was on the 19th of March, 1884, that Isaac Sharp steamed away from the American shores. Of his arrival at Liverpool he writes : “ While yet on board in a cloud-

less mental atmosphere I received from loving lips a cordial welcome home." He adds modestly: "However small the outcome and the retrospect, I feel that the ordering of this long pilgrimage, now brought to a close, has not been my own. The hand of the Good Shepherd with manifest guidance has, I believe, been mercifully in it with the unmerited but gracious owning of His love and peace. To God only wise be glory through Jesus Christ for ever, with deep thanksgiving and heartfelt praise."

Thus was ended a memorable journey of six years and a half in which by varied stages the circuit of the globe was made.

A year or two earlier, in a letter to his sister Priscilla, he had said: "I sometimes feel as if I should *cry* were I once more to enter that hall again and try to say in the language of dreamland, 'No mistake *this time*!' So with a sigh I pass on. The telephone is a new device since I left home. When will mental telephones go faithfully to their journey's end and bring a loving message back!" But albeit his disposition was so affectionate, he did not enervate himself with vain longings. "The real of life," he remarks in another letter, "is very real, sometimes intensely so. In the ideal there is apt to be a sort of revelling, needing—whether for height or depth—a governing power, lest it run riot. '*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.*' Blessed trust and strength and stay, pointing to a harbour where no storm bloweth; perennial freshness there in the home of eternal love." Do not these words show wherein lay the whole secret of his strength?

In a letter to James Backhouse during his long journey he wrote: "Ever since I was in Stewart Island, as near to the South Pole as I could well attain, it has felt as if I must have turned the corner, and so I did, but the zig-zags have come in, and I am in one of them now—grateful and glad of heart at having in possession the warrant of the

King ; nothing short of this would suffice for present and prospective experience. But the watchword so graciously given me at the outset is with me still :

‘ Forward and fear not,
Let thy faith be firm.’

This has been with me in all weathers, and they have been variable, *very*, now and then.”

When writing to a sister a few days later, after telling her that he soon hopes to be in the United States, he added : “and *then* ! the notched stick of schoolboy days may supply the inference . . . If favoured to get through all in the near future I may by and bye have some addition to make in the *ever extending spheres of nature and of grace*.” In reference to his visit to Mexico he had said : “ I could not go there last year because of the yellow fever, and all the time Mexico has been on my mind as a place to be visited, and now that it is over I almost look back in wonderment at its accomplishment for the way was toilsome and the dangers not a few.”

Whilst in Mexico, he had remarked in a letter to Martha Braithwaite : “ No misgiving attends my mind in being amid the dangers of this land. The Lord is over all, and if following His gracious ordering it is surely well, whatever may betide. I am hungry for letters and for tidings of many who are dear to me, thy honoured and beloved husband among them.”

Whilst on the Atlantic Ocean he had written to his brother Thomson Sharp : “ The belting of the globe is nearly complete and this long pilgrimage is nearing its close and (O joy of heart !), with a halo of love and mercy over all. Read together the shortest psalm, that gem of praise.”

In February, 1885, Isaac Sharp went to Ilkley to help his sister Priscilla Dunning to bring her husband home to Middlesbrough in an invalid carriage. The death of the latter about a week afterwards was a great blow to him,

and he said it made him feel ten years older. Broadstairs became shortly afterwards Isaac Sharp's home, and the niece who lived with Mrs. Dunning writes : " But it was wonderful how he got over the many shocks and bereavements that were his portion as, owing to his own great age, he naturally was called upon to part with his friends one by one, and to feel himself more and more lonely in the world. ' Lonely, but not alone,' as he loved to say. He busied himself with many things and was interested in *everything*. I read in the diary of his attending a lecture on Protoplasm ; of his going to plant ivy on my uncle's grave ; then to hear Mark Guy Pearse lecture at a chapel in Ramsgate or Margate. ' The world was his parish,' as W. C. Braithwaite said at his funeral. Nothing that interested any of those near and dear to him failed to interest him. When our mother died in 1864 no one could have been more loving and fatherly to us than was dear uncle Isaac. He said : ' Now you feel more than ever my children.'

" His was a lovely presence in the house, and yet he spent his time so quietly over his books and papers when he was at home—which was but seldom—that there seems but little to record except to say that to live under the same roof with him was always a pleasure and a privilege. He was wonderfully sympathetic and helpful and took a keen interest in life and in all that was going on around him, ever ready to listen as well as to impart, whatever the subject put before him might be. There was scarcely a topic on which he was not ready to converse, and he was as much at home with the clergyman of the parish in which he resided, and with the doctor, as he was with friends of longer acquaintance and of ideas more nearly coinciding with his own. Our servants used very much to appreciate his prayers.

" He was much valued at the little meeting of ' Drapers,' near Margate, where most of those who attended were inmates of the almshouses and found his loving words

of exhortation and of sympathy and cheer very helpful. He was very often away at other meetings.

"I was frequently very anxious on account of the delicate health of my aunt whilst we were at Broadstairs, and instead of my uncle Isaac being an additional care—as such an old man might well have been—I found him a wonderful help. He used to tell me never to hesitate to call him at any hour of the day or night, even if I wanted counsel only."

In a letter to his daughter, written in the summer of 1885, Isaac Sharp says: "We are not far from the sea, but far enough for the trees to grow, and St. Peter's is like a suburb of Broadstairs, and away from its visitors and din. This suits my sister well and, indeed, suits us all. S. is a vigorous and most willing helper with scarcely sufficient regard for herself. My brother's* portrait in oils is in a better light here than formerly. Sixteen weeks have not sufficed to remove the dreamlike feeling of it all. One could still almost listen for the foot-fall never to return. I have never felt well since his illness and death. Nevertheless writing on the day on which I enter my eightieth year, I do desire thankfulness of heart for the multiplied blessings still vouchsafed in our heavenly Father's care and in a Saviour's love. Two very nice *south* rooms are mine, with a view into the country and with a wooded horizon."

In February, 1886, he made a remarkable entry, beginning on the first page of one of his MS. books:

"Revelation i. 11, 'What thou seest write in a book.' As usual, in the early part of the year I was a good deal confined to the house. . . . There was, nevertheless, the sustained feeling embraced in the sense given me that *the end is not yet*, and day by day I dwelt in an atmosphere of peace. My dear sister Priscilla's love and care and home are tenderly appreciated, as of and in and from the Lord. . . . A halo of love and peace is round about

* John Dunning.

me with a wonderful sense of Divine overshadowing, as in a day of espousal, with the language upwelling, 'Faithful is He that hath called you *who also will do it.*' The seal is afresh set of pardon and of peace with a gracious renewal of trust and rest ; and with it the prompting, 'What thou seest write in a book.'

"Is anything too hard for the Lord ?

"Four score and four ! Syria, India, Japan, and America.

"The will of the Lord be done, whether the vision be as from the top of Pisgah, terminating there ; or He, in the plentitude of His own power, be pleased to renew my youth as the eagle's for the performance of this great pilgrimage. If it be the will of the great Leader and Commander, the Lord Jesus Christ, He will make a way, where otherwise there would be no way, in the heart and mind of mine own people. . . . As the Lord willeth—

'Look unto Me
And thou shalt see.

'The closer thou dost follow Me
The greater shall the blessing be,
In heaven and earth, by land and sea,
Wherefore arise and follow Me.'

"So grant it Lord ! Amen.

"A lesson for many days : 'Have faith in God.' "

A week later he writes : "For two or three days I have had much pain with diminished power, but do not lose heart. The Lord is over all. Jeremiah xxx. 2 : 'Thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel, saying, Write all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book.' . . . Silent and deep has been the centreing of my soul this day."

Again he writes : "Powerfully upon me day by day is the looming of a still distant horizon, a vision *now* of a vivid by and by, should the Lord of the harvest so order it for me ; concerning which, whatever may betide, 'The will of the Lord be done.' Lesson for the day ! *What*

strength thou hast is of the Lord. The weakness is thine own."

A month later he writes: "My dear sister Priscilla's case is one of deep concern and solicitude. Her condition has been one of much suffering. . . . It is tenderly touching to me to see her in this state and to feel powerless for her relief. . . . She had the satisfaction and comfort of hearing in the evening of the birth of her fourth grandchild, the daughter of A. M. D. They call the little new comer Hilda Mary, a rhythmic name. For most of a week I have kept the house . . . probably owing to some internal trouble, and no wonder, at the verge of eighty. . . . My faith remains through all, unshaken in the vision, with an earnest and abiding desire that body, soul, and spirit may be in subjection to the will of the Lord. . . . My heart uprises with thanksgiving. 'Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also *in Him*, and He will bring it to pass.'"

Thoughts on the momentous subject often present with him did not make him forget the wonted trifling kindnesses which are the sweetness of daily life. So a grand-daughter receives a note: "Dear little Lena,—Yes, I do like photos very much. . . . Mignonette! Oh, so sweet; I do like mignonette. Once I sent some flower seeds a long way off to Greenland, and it was eighteen years after when I heard of their arrival. Once some Esquimaux children gathered some wild flowers for me. I thought it was very kind of them. To be kind costs but little, but gives much pleasure." . . .

In the summer of this year, 1886, feeling that the time had not yet come for distant labour, after returning a certificate he held for service in different parts of his native land, Isaac Sharp obtained another for similar visits to meetings in various parts of England, Ireland and Scotland. In reference to his attendance of the Friends' Yearly Meeting, held in May for some twelve days in London, he says: "I much enjoyed it, but from first to last my mind was under con-

tinuous exercise, so deep at times it almost felt as if the time had already come (though I know it was not so) for casting this prospect of service, still in vision, before the Church for judgment. Not more full and deep was the pressure foreshadowing that long journey in which the earth was girdled. . . . The wisdom of this world is against it, but the Lord is over all, and He reigneth King for ever."

Again he says : " The service revealed to me, as in a vision of light, is present with me in its freshness almost continuously, so I wait the fulfilment of the sign, having no warrant to move forward till then. . . . My strength at eighty appears marvellous to many. Is it not given me for a purpose yet to be revealed ? Hast thou faith ? Have it to thyself before God. Ordinary common sense would ignore it, setting a limit to the limitless. Nevertheless faith is in the ascendant, and to the Lord I commit my way. I was last week in Cornwall, and at the ancient meeting-house of 'Come-to-good.' The place was too small for the people who came, and the overflow gathered round the windows outside, so from the foot-board of the carriage, drawn up near to the windows, it was my favoured lot, helped by the Lord, to minister with a loud, clear voice to the people, who listened with deep attention. The sky was over us for a canopy, and around us green leaves and branches served for curtains. The promise of the Lord Jesus was fulfilled, He being graciously manifest in our midst."

On the 4th of July, his eightieth anniversary, in a letter to Sir Joseph Whitwell Pease, he says : " Oh ! this whirligig of time, with its ever recurrent seasons as they come and go ! And oh ! the still more everlasting *now*, when terrestrial days or days' decades shall come and go no more for ever ; so that I am ready at times to praise the dead that are already dead more than the living which are yet alive, so far as the Spirit beareth witness with our spirits that they, of Christ's redeeming love

and mercy, in beatitude inconceivable are forever with the Lord."

Not long afterwards he writes : " Pondering early this morning on the almost ever-present prospect before me—clear, peaceful, bright—yet in a sense of its environment and my utter helplessness for its fulfilment, save as helped by the Lord in the threefold need of body, soul, and spirit, a great weight of exercise was upon me, as it often is." Then he quotes a number of Scripture texts with regard to committing the way to the Lord, including His gracious promise : " I will even make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." Isaiah xliii. 19.

In November, after alluding to an absence of eight weeks on religious service in Ireland and the North of England, he adds : " Through all, as the needle to the pole, so my abiding ponderings centre in one spot, that wonderful journey of the future should it so be in the ordering of the Lord, to whom, as with a burst of thanksgiving, I yet once more *commit* my way and my all."

At the close of 1886 he writes : " The last day of the year, and with it comes a precious invitation :

' Let not thy heart fail thee ;
The vision is yet for an appointed time ! ' "

In April of the following year, we find the entry : " Reminiscence of a powerful experience, which may be faintly portrayed thus : I felt like being near the great white Throne in a hemisphere of peace. . . . And then I saw beyond the earthly and, as it seemed to me, in the light of the heavenly, that ' Thy will be done ' must embrace a willingness to go or stay. . . . There was a precious sense of deep, deep peace ; peace with God through Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit bearing witness of it wondrously with this added lesson, ' Abide in patience and keep the watch, watching for the sign.' "

In May he records his attendance at the Friends' Yearly Meeting in London. " A time of deep proving fell

to my lot, and of dimness in the absence of spiritual power, a baptism of suffering, possibly a baptism for service. . . . There is a baptism for speech and a baptism for silence."

As was often the case, he writes, "A day of memorial," in his entry for the 26th of July. He adds: "Forty-five years ago this day the words were fulfilled, 'until it shall please the Lord by death to separate us.'" He quotes from the sacredly simple words used in the marriage covenant of the Society of Friends.

In August, 1887, when writing from Trevor Lodge, Broadstairs, to his daughter, he says in reference to his sister, "Dear 'Aunt Priscilla' has been apparently nigh unto death, but has rallied somewhat once more. S. did her part well, but could not watch night and day, so a trained nurse from Dover came. This, as I understand it, is just the case at present. P. may be with us for months, or a severe attack might bring us to the end of the chapter at any time. What she has been and *is* to me, and what I feel, as I thus write, I do not attempt to pourtray in words. So I pass on to say that for many weeks Scotland, the General Meeting at Aberdeen, and other meetings in that land were prominently before me. With a somewhat heavy heart, but with a hopeful spirit and the cherished trust that we might meet again on earth, I took my leave on the 4th of this month. It was a touching time, but the Lord was near as I knelt by her side and committed this loved one in prayer to Him. Then I left with an easy mind, knowing that He is over all, who doeth all things well."

It is like the writer of the letter that further on, after giving some account of a meeting, he goes on to say: "Tell Oswald and Lena what befel grandfather on the way," and then gives an amusing description of the loss of his hat.

In his next letter to his daughter in California, he begins: "Eyes that have winked for four-score years and

may have some winking yet to do, may well plead excuse for a holiday and the absence of the use (to them the familiar use) of midnight oil; *so my correspondence is shortened*. I say no more on this head, save that they are the better for rest and treatment."

In September, he remarks in his journal: "Alike for the *earthly* and the *heavenly*, the voice is still sounded in the secret of the soul:

'Look unto Me
And thou shalt see.'

While pondering on the earthly last night, a lesson of great power came before me, in the words of the Lord Jesus, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.'

In allusion to his sister he writes: "How intimately are the threads of our existence interwoven!" The parting was near at hand.

On the 1st of November, while Isaac Sharp was addressing a company of Friends at York, a telegram was handed him to inform him of her death. He writes: "My beloved sister was mercifully spared the 'swellings of Jordan' she had so much dreaded. . . . She slept the sleep of death, I thankfully believe for a wonderful waking in the shadowless land where there is 'no more pain.'" The weight of sorrow was a heavy burden, but with him there was never a burden which could not be brought to a sympathizing Saviour. Soon we find some touching entries in his little book, written too when suffering from physical weakness: "Vitality low, mercy over all; grace and help prevailing, with no belief that the end is very near. Stricken, sorely stricken; my loss is great but the Comforter is near." Then five days later: "Desolation, loneliness, severance, life's barometer low. Deep calleth unto deep day by day, but the Lord reigneth. . . ."

"Deep, deep the travail of his soul within,
Wearing the while the sackcloth next his skin."

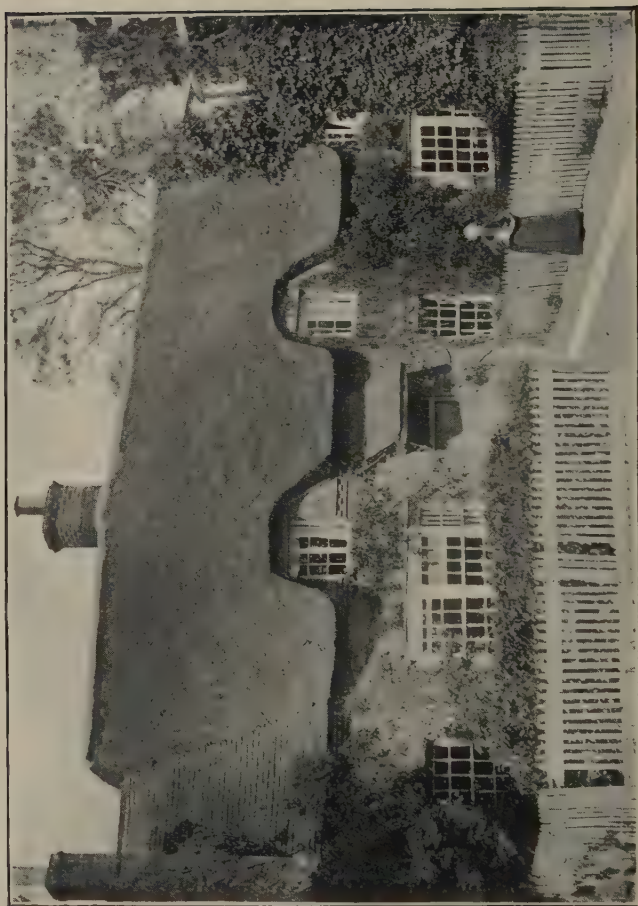
It is pleasant to link with these extracts from his diary a passage in a letter to one of his friends, in which he says : " It is well that the Christian ever keep the watch lest Satan enter in between the soul and Christ, presenting to the mind more fear than faith."

The large services to which Isaac Sharp felt himself called did not lessen his belief in the Lord's guidance in intercourse with individuals, and about a month afterwards he writes : " Went to Croydon and called on Dr. W. H. R. He is now more feeble than I had anticipated. I was glad to see him and he appeared pleased with the call and to converse on the Spanish New Testament Commentary. . . . I knelt beside the doctor and offered prayer, to which he responded slowly and with feeling, Amen, Amen, Amen ! and then supplicated on my behalf. I had felt a strong attraction to go, and trust it was to both of us graciously granted as a 'brook by the way.'"

"A new home," he now writes, "is looming in the future. . . . And in love and mercy there comes welling up, as a precious lesson for the day, 'The Lord will provide.' In prospect of the coming change and varied claims my pecuniary resources are slender. I believe the Lord would still have me be as a servant in waiting. The prospect of foreign service as the months roll on diminishes not in brightness and clearness of vision. . . . 'He that believeth shall not make haste.'"

Early in 1888 he writes : "Deep exercise of soul continues to be my lot ; frequent and deep, early and late, oft in the day and at times by night are the blendings of faith and patience, hope and trust, as in their varied phases they come and go, leaving through all, deep and full, *the will of the Lord is best, the will of the Lord be done.* . . . The offer of a home at Ettington I feel thankful for, and peaceful in the acceptance of, whether for a longer or shorter period."

Many other offers of a home had been made him and not by relatives only. The rooms offered him by his kind



ISAC SHARP'S HOME AT ETTINGTON.

friend Sarah Gibbins, and again at her decease by her son and daughter, in an old and picturesque house at Ettington, were gratefully accepted, and here he found his home to the end of his life. In this village his brother Thomson and his wife were already living, and were afterwards joined by a niece and her husband. In this sequestered hamlet is a quaint and stone-floored meeting-house, the entrance into which is by a wooden-latched door more than two hundred years old. It is surrounded by a shady and beautifully-kept graveyard. In February, 1888, the removal was accomplished. Frequent intercourse with his brother was much enjoyed, as also with the Gibbins family, whose home was always open to him. It was like "one of life's dreams" to the brothers thus to be thrown together, and there are many allusions to it in his journal. It was also a mental stimulus. "Thomson called on me in the evening," he writes on one occasion, "and we had an enjoyable time in reading and communing. Milton on Father, Son, and Holy Ghost was one of the features of deep interest."

After saying how much he was feeling the cold weather, he goes on: "But then! three score and ten *and ten*, and nearly two—in my 82nd year—the marvel is, my friends still say, and often say, my vigour for the time of life is wonderful, and lo! *I partly believe it.*"

A day or two later, on March 1st, he goes to London to attend one or two meetings there before entering on religious service amongst Friends in Ireland. His sympathy at one place was aroused for his host, whose sorrow was very great in the loss of his wife who had died a few months earlier. "He was kind and agreeable," Isaac Sharp says, "and spoke of his youngest son—save the baby—as being his shadow, following him wherever he goes; a frail-looking but almost fascinating face with a semi-ethereal look. The father came with me into my bedroom, but my heart was almost too full and deep for utterance. I almost groaned aloud for him, after he left, with yearning sympathy."

What a key to hearts such sympathy must have been !

"How precious," writes John Pulsford, "is human sympathy ! It proceeds from and reaches to the heart of heaven."

The latest entry in his journal for 1888 is the following :

"Soliloquy. Eventide.

" ' Am I prepared to let this concern fade away ? ' "

"Response :

" ' I dare not give it up ! ' "

‘ Nothing to *ask*, but to *wait*,
To wait and the watch to keep,
Abiding at Wisdom's Gate.' "

"Bring all into subjection, O Lord, and graciously *keep* it there.

"Thou shalt surely go and I will be with thee."

CHAPTER XII.

“ Thy will and counsel, Shepherd true,
Have ever proved unfailing,
When, through Thy love prevailing,
My steps they onward drew.
So, if this new heart stirring
Comes from Thy love unerring,
Thy gracious purpose all fulfil;
If not, prevent it by Thy will.”

C. C. L. Von Pfeil.

“ Father, as in Thy high heaven
So on earth, to Thy decree
Be our glad obedience given;
Oh, fulfil Thy will in me.”

Ibid.

IN the latter part of 1888, Isaac Sharp had made the following record in his diary: “Pondering deeply this day on the expected yet to be, although my eyes are holden, ‘Thou shalt surely go’ is much more in harmony with my inner life than in any degree a call to surrender, save in continuance of that which in wonderful grace has been aforetime wrought concerning this thing, viz: ‘*Thy will be done.*’ I have been permitted to glance at 1890 as a probable period—when on the verge of four-score and four—for entering on this work of faith. Meanwhile my heart responds to the breathing: ‘*Thy judgments are a great deep.*’—Psalm xxxvi. 6. . . . Concerning the intervening space it may be the Lord has His own fathomless and hidden purposes to accomplish . . . and

for myself strength for the way and day. The lesson comes home afresh to myself, heaven-sent as I thankfully believe, 'Have faith in God.' So grant it, Lord, whatever lies before me. Amen. Amen."

On the 24th of March, 1889, he writes: "With an internal malady, held by one of the first physicians to be *incurable*, and suffering from it from time to time night and day, the prospect of long travel sometimes appears very serious, and a shade of discouragement, like a shadow of Satan, has, though very rarely, come over me, although never to overwhelming, for the Lord is over all. Body, soul, and spirit, that wonderful threefold union, are subject to the word of the Great Healer, with whom moreover are the issues of life and death." In a letter to Sir J. W. Pease, he says: "While thus writing two brothers come to my mind. They were widely apart in their location. The one I learned to love in the wilds of Labrador, in his mission labour there, the other in South Africa. They were good men, and earnest, each in his own way, but their lines were not parallel. So it has been (so I suppose it still is the world over); witness E. and J. of D., of the bygone generations, diverse exceedingly, yet of purpose fully set, each holding his own with a grip. The South African brother, Theodore Weiz, was quaint in simile, and ready of illustration. As we walked along he called my attention to a well-worn spade stuck in the ground. 'That spade,' said he, 'was *new once*, and it did a deal of work, but the wear of years reduced its power, for by degrees it was more than half worn away; not laid aside altogether, but stuck in the ground, *ready for any delving it could yet accomplish!!*'

"How often since those days in South Africa has this simile been present with me. For my friends often remind me that the remaining vigour of the days exceeds the common lot at four-score and two, and the dear Lord raises a responsive echo in my heart that it is even so. Possibly as a means to an end for some yet to be service

instead of suffering, till He bid me lay the harness down and rest—

‘ The way of the Lord is wisest,
The will of the Lord be done.’ ”

In another letter to Sir J. W. Pease, "who was," remarks a near relative, "a most sympathetic correspondent to the last," Isaac Sharp says: "There is a service pertaining to earth and the passing away; and a service for heaven. The dear Lord knew it well in that He cared for the *bodies* as well as for the *souls* of men. He careth still, and lo! herein there are many ministries for Him which He graciously loveth to own with the benediction, 'Ye did it unto me.' . . . A sudden break down of old age *may* come at any time. But all this gives me small concern. I have the strength and love *to use it*, and to be thankful for it, for the Lord is pleased to own it still. I never was in Mildmay Conference Hall but expect to be there to-morrow night by request, of my cordial free-will, but not of my own seeking."

Two months later, in a letter to his only remaining sister, he remarks: "Sudden loss of vital power in old age is commonly looked upon as a condition to be severely watched. I am in degree in this state, but *I fear it not*. To my belief the end is not yet. There is something more to do for the Master, so I dare believe without (I do trust) one dash of boasting, joyfully enabled to couple with it, 'The will of the Lord be done.'"

Whilst writing in this strain to his friends, it is only to the pages of a little MS. book that he confides the secret of his Lord until the time for its development arrive. What he writes there on the 5th of May, 1889, he calls a "shadowy pourtrayal of a vivid reality; a day of deep feeling but of comfort and trust. A sense that the Lord will provide has been vividly before me, and a wonderful ease of spirit. . . . The idea presented as of a shield, to be worn out of sight on the breast, with the inscription, 'Action or acquiescence,' with a willingness *that* the Lord

should erase as it pleaseth Him the one or the other. A more definite sense, moreover, took hold of me for 1890. Four score and four with a definite purpose in it. So under a canopy of love and peace I retired for the night."

It has been well said that the secret of the blessing that attended the life of Isaac Sharp was "his faith, clear, strong, and simple. *He did not ask for more than God was ready to give. He was content to wait through the years for the unfolding of God's purposes.*" And as we ponder this fact we recall the remarkable words of George Müller, in reference to the building of his second Orphan Home : "There has passed scarcely an hour in which, whilst awake, this matter has not been more or less before me. I converse with no one about it, and deal with God alone in order that no outward influence may keep me from attaining unto a clear discovery of His will. . . . I continue to beseech the Lord that He will not allow me to be deluded, but I may say I have scarcely any doubt as to what will be the issue, even that I should go forward with this matter. I could wait for years by God's grace, were this His will, before even taking one single step towards this thing. And on the other hand I could set to work to-morrow, were the Lord to bid me to do so. This state of mind is the fullest assurance to me that my heart is not under a fleshly excitement, and that if I am helped thus to go on *I shall know the will of God to the full.* But I do crave the glorious privilege to be more and more used by the Lord."

In one of Isaac Sharp's letters, written about this time, we find the following allusion to the late John T. Dorland : "I met with him in 1883-4, and felt then, and rejoice now for the gift that is in him. His massive, Spurgeon-like head has a large brain inside, and below it a loving and tender heart."

On the 24th of May he writes in his little book : "On the verge of the 'Border Land,' but with less expectancy of death than of life, and graciously enabled to breathe 'Thy

will be done' in an atmosphere of peace and praise with thanksgiving. In Psalm cxviii. is the record, 'I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord!' Even as of old so now, O Lord."

Isaac Sharp was intensely sympathetic and of a very affectionate disposition. He therefore took a deep personal interest in his friends and in what concerned their well-being. He liked for them to tell him about themselves and their interests, and, with no unwholesome dread of *being thought* egotistical, he would at times pay back in like measure. In one of his letters, he says: "I did get to the Warwickshire Quarterly Meeting, that was the 'last nutmeg,' under the weight of which the poor old camel broke down." Then, after alluding to sudden illness from an internal malady, he adds: "I felt like H. P.'s mother, among the rapidly rising billows in her husband's small trading craft, 'George, my dear, something must be done!'" As there was no doctor at Ettington, Isaac Sharp, by the advice of Dr. Nason of Stratford-on-Avon, took lodgings at the latter place with a skilful nurse. Twenty-eight days had to be spent in bed. "The love of God in His dear Son has been so mercifully and manifestly round about me, even as a wall which Satan has no power to break through:

'Oh to grace how great a debtor.'"

Two months later he left home for religious service in Scotland. In one of his letters, he says that to him travel was "no trouble, and as for *strange* beds I know them not, although well aware of the difference between a feather bed on a spring mattress and the 'open' in winter among the mountains in Mexico, lying on a rush mat without the cover of a canvas tent, while the prairie wolves were howling in the forest hard by, and, as I was told, there were plenty of snakes, but I escaped unharmed. Surely 'they who mark the hand of Providence will never want a Providence to mark.'"

On the 30th of November, 1889, in a letter to Sir J. W. Pease, he writes : " Finding some tendency to a partial return of the internal ailment of six months since, I came to town and placed myself under the care of a specialist, which has necessitated a tarriance in London. I do not regret it, although the benefit has been less marked than anticipation indicated. I hold that while we have a body to care for it is our bounden duty—seeking the while a blessing upon it—to do the best in our power to keep it in repair. My general health is good. . . . At Ettington my brother Thomson and I see more of each other than we have ever done before consecutively ; and, being closely bound in a loving brotherhood, we enjoy it greatly when both at home.

"For myself *I am often on the wing*. My eyes are decidedly better ; Dr. Bell Taylor's treatment having, I think, proved very successful.

"I have continuously good accounts from my daughter and son-in-law and their five children, who have now settled near to San José in California. . . . They attend the same meeting as our dear friend Joel Bean, who wrote a brief poem for New Year's day, entitled ' No more sea.' Two stanzas run thus :

' A little child once more,
Treading life's western shore,
A vast unfathomed deep stretches far out before.

Yet led by my Father's hand,
To the realm of the spirit land,
He will more and more reveal what I do not understand.' "

Again he writes : " All the particulars of thy home circle interest me as they ever do, though a semi-sense of fossilization comes over me when I hear of young life, early manhood and womanhood, lovingly bound in a tender and blessed union—during the days it may please an allwise Providence to grant as ' heirs together of the

grace of life'—*each other's joy in the Lord.* : . . The duration of my own married life is soon told ; from 2nd month 6th, 1839 to 7th month 26th, 1842. . . . While often very sensible how soon this happy union came to an end, I have also seen in it through the vista of years, the tracery of the hand of the Lord therein with a wonderful blending of this life and the next. . . . While lying ill in Norway I had a wonderful vision of angels and of their presence, self poised and balanced perfectly, resting on nothing, a heavenly choir with a heavenly melody. No pinion stirred, I saw no face, and heard no single voice, but my beloved wife was undoubtedly among them, a sweet evidence to me of her exalted happiness, 'enduring as the days of heaven.' I had never doubted it, but this felt to me a very precious sense of its reality. My mind at the time was perfectly clear without the slightest trace of fever myth. I still look back with thanksgiving to this vision, and with an abiding sense of her great joy."

While detained in London the opportunity was embraced for attending some of the meetings in the vicinity. After remarking that Dr. F. spoke wisely and well on *tenderness* as a characteristic of Christianity so opposed to the *hardness* with which it is in contrast, Isaac Sharp adds, "We look in vain in the domain of Satan for tenderness, hence the need of being translated into the kingdom of the dear Son of God. Some of the moments of our lives we live over again with joy and do well to cherish, and to feel the nearness of the love of God, and the gracious help of His Spirit in bringing to remembrance His *tenderness and the nearness of it in His beloved Son.*" After alluding to a visit to the breakfast-meeting at the Bedford Institute, Spitalfields, he adds: "Evidences are not wanting of a blessing on this labour of love, and so the labourers toil on in hope."

In a letter of New Year's day, 1890, he remarks : "The present year may be to each of us one of great issues, *on my own mind there is a looming of it.* Although four score

and four winters have passed over my head there is in anticipation, more, for thyself and for me, more of life than of death, natural and spiritual, the near future, if in simple faith we truly follow the Good Shepherd and ever live within sound of His voice."

On the 10th of April, in a letter to Sir J. W. Pease, after alluding to a conversation they had had some time earlier, Isaac Sharp continues: "*I could not then say all that was in my heart*, and year by year the seal continued unbrokenly set, 'Tell the vision to no man.' But the vision was for an appointed time. The restraining hand of the Lord was upon me and I dared not go forward till He gave me leave, and on this wise the earliest opportunity has been taken to-day." He goes on to say that at the Friends' "Monthly Meeting," held at Darlington that day, a certificate had been granted him for religious service in France, Syria, Constantinople, India, Japan and America. "It has yet to be seen how far the Quarterly Meeting on the 17th will endorse the action of Darlington Monthly Meeting, and if so, the like as regards the Yearly Meeting.

"But my feeling is strong on this wise, If the Lord willeth who shall say Nay? . . . My heart rejoices with thanksgiving in the ability graciously granted to say: 'My times are in Thy hand,' for life or death, for suffering or for service.

So to Thee, O Thou King and Creator!
Unto Thee, O Thou Ancient of days!
The Father, the Son, and the Spirit,
Unto Thee, unto Thee do I raise
The tribute of glory and honour,
And might, and dominion, and praise.

Amen."

To the same correspondent he writes from London during the Friends' Yearly Meeting in May: "At eventide I pen a few lines to say that a deeply important day is drawing to its peaceful close. . . . My 'concern' (for foreign service) took hold of the meeting, and there

was a large expression of loving unity, not, however, without three dissentient voices chiefly on the ground of *Anno Domini*. . . . I am favoured to feel remarkably well after the physical refreshment of a tramp on the Sussex Downs with my brother, when we did our twelve miles, in addition to six hours in the open air."

In a letter written shortly before the holding of the Yearly Meeting, he remarks : " I am favoured to feel calm, quiet, and peaceful, not without a sense of reliant trust in looking forward to the 20th." Then with characteristic fairness he adds : " I find it difficult to realise what I might have felt had it been anyone else ; so it behoves me to feel tenderly for the views of any who may not see eye to eye with me in this matter. My sheet anchor is, 'The Lord reigneth' ; He is over all, over all, now and for ever."

On the 1st of June he writes to his daughter in California : " London Yearly Meeting for 1890 is now a thing of the past, and it has been truly a memorable one. The presence and owning of the Lord was realised from sitting to sitting. . . . When, in the past, I wrote : 'Thou never need expect me to cross the *Atlantic* for a visit to California,' there was on my heart *all the while* a full expectancy of entering the United States once more *by way of the Golden Gates* ! Wonderful if this should still come to pass in the year 18— !

" Four years ago *I* was ready, but the dear Lord said *not yet*, and moreover, gave the charge, the imperative charge, *Tell the vision to no man*. I have faith to begin this long journey, and faith to leave the issue, and here is my stronghold of rest and peace. Among my dear friends, whom I love and value, some are doubtful, some full of fear, and others not less full of faith. As for myself, I am graciously sustained by the Lord with a wonderful freedom from all anxiety."

A missionary from Madagascar, to whom reference has already been made, and who was now residing in England,

when told of the formidable service contemplated by Isaac Sharp, remarked: "If Mr. Sharp says so, I have not a shadow of doubt that he is called to the work, and I am sure he will be enabled to perform it."

When he was about to start on his journey, a severe illness confined him to a London Hotel for a month, but, however it might be with his friends, his own faith did not falter. He wrote: "A beacon light is still burning on the coast of France, bright in mental vision with no cloud to obscure it. I saw it as I lay prostrate, and see it still, burning with radiant brightness, fed with oil from the rock by night and by day. I look forward in hope with joyful expectancy, enabled with quiet confidence to go forth and leave the issue, *whatever the issue may be*, without an anxious thought."

It had been arranged that with Captain Pim as his companion, he should set out for Syria in October. On the 2nd of that month a Farewell Meeting was held at Devonshire House. It was a pleasure to him to see so many young people amongst those present. He said it was a comfort to him to have their company and loving interest. He spoke in a clear, full voice, although in reality not well enough to be out. For three days and nights the continuous return of severe spasms greatly reduced his strength. For ten days Captain Pim remained with him without undressing, and Mrs. Pim was his efficient nurse.

"A canopy of peace," he writes, "was over all and I felt happy, for the Lord condescended to be very near me and faith was not permitted to fail whilst looking ahead. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.' . . . Two evenings ago Dr. Hutchinson startled me. . . . He suggested chloroform. . . . My heart went up to the Lord for the grace of endurance and my prayer was heard and graciously granted. I had reason to remember the words, 'Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear.' . . . I was exceedingly interested in watching the doctor's grave

countenance in reference to my allusion to the work before me. He 'could not recommend or encourage a man between eighty and ninety to start out on such a journey!' but promptly added with a semi-twinkle in his eye that probably it would not be long before I was in Paris!! He was most kind, gentle and sympathetic. . . . Just one thing more the Lord has graciously enabled me to breathe abidingly, 'Thy will be done,' and yet there has ever been along with it a belief that the years of training in the school of Christ for the service prospectively before me, would yet in the Lord's own time break forth in gracious fulfilment."

Well indeed was it for Isaac Sharp that he could "breathe abidingly, Thy will be done." The strong faith was about to be yet more strongly tested. Hardly had he reached Paris before there was a return of illness and a necessity for medical care. Then came a fall on the slippery well-waxed floor of his bedroom, when he received a heavy blow on his left side. Dr. Anderson bandaged the ribs and wished a celebrated surgeon to be consulted, M. Jalaguier. Although there was no fracture, there was a laceration of the muscles. Valuable suggestions were made by the surgeon with regard to the treatment of the various ailments.

"It is a serious case," he said. "You will never be able to take the long journey. For the present you can only stay where you are and you must not leave your bed for a single minute. Captain Pim will not be able to do what is needful in watching night by night and a male attendant must be engaged." M. Jalaguier spoke favourably of M. Anderson's skill and smiled when Isaac Sharp said to him: "The Lord is able to raise me up and I believe He will." "I did not tell him," he remarks in his diary, "of the gracious assurance granted me at the outset of this Parisian experience, when the words of David rose up before me as he narrates so graphically the saying of some of the outspoken, 'An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him: and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more.'

But David's Lord said otherwise. Even so said the Lord to me, as I venture to believe, in clear vision :

'Keep near to Me.

Use all lawful means,

Be patient, and I will bring thee through.' "

Meanwhile the summing up of the medical report, signed by both doctors, is just such as one would expect under the circumstances. It concludes with these words : " Dans cette condition, il est tout-à-fait impossible que Monsieur Sharp entreprenne un long voyage, et la prudence, la plus élémentaire commande que M. Sharp, dès qu'il sera transportable, puisse rentrer dans sa famille."

On the same day Isaac Sharp, in a letter to his friend Samuel Purdie, of Mexico, remarks : "'The Lord is able to raise me up, and *I believe He will*. So here I rest happy as a prince. Is it not written, 'Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King' ?"

To his journal, he thus confides an account of a call paid him by one whom he describes as being " vigorous in physical and mental strength " : " He said that it may be the Lord's will to bless the dedication unfulfilled more than the completion of active service. He never asked me how I felt about it, or of the secret whisper of the Lord. He remarked that I had had no service in Paris, a self-evident fact, for I have been in bed all the time. Moreover, that I had apparently nearly got to the last verse of the chapter, and evidently concluded that it would be best for me to give up the residue. This is the voice of a man, dignified, honoured, and blessed in his service for the King, but still the voice of a man. But from the very depths comes welling up, as I believe, the voice of the Lord with a ring of the *heavenly*, bearing with it an odour of fragrance, and whispering of the *yet to be*. Blessed be the Name of the Lord."

In a letter to his daughter, he says, in reference to the time before he left England : " A beacon light lit up the coast of France and it continued undimmed, and now *I see*

no light on the other side to beacon me back. . . . I am subject to the recall of the Committee, but it must be *their recall*."

In a letter addressed to the London Committee, he says : " I deeply feel the responsibility of my dear friends of the Committee at this juncture. In the exercise of a large and vigorous faith, a certificate was granted me for a religious visit to many lands ; and lo ! at the very outset, I am laid by. I cannot understand it, but that the Lord has an unseen purpose in it I am well assured ; possibly as a searching discipline for that which yet lies before me. . . . Should the Committee, and the Meeting for Sufferings, *require my return I feel bound to follow their instructions implicitly*. . . . For myself there is light ahead, but not one ray in the direction of the English Channel. . . . I am sensible of no discharge from the errand of love in which, I assuredly believe, the Lord has condescended to lead me forth. I am favoured with great peace in *looking ahead*. Thereon no mental cloud is resting, but over all a clear blue canopy of heavenly love with quiet confidence. The first three days of my illness were marked with continuous suffering, intensified by a fall. . . . The waves and the billows passed over me, but, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ my feet remained firmly on the rock. Then, in my need, came a gracious portion, an anchor for many days which still holds fast : Abide with Me. Use all lawful means. Be patient, and I, the Lord, will bring thee through. And it came to pass that between the Lord and this gracious assurance, Satan has had no power to pass. And so I believe in this unfolding of heavenly counsel, and look forward with quiet confidence. Hitherto I have told this vision to no one, but it seems right now to share it with you. . . . Far rather would I go forward and die in harness if such be the will of the Lord, than die of a faint heart in my own land with the harness laid aside." But it was to life not death that he looked forward.

"Little mother," he would say to Mrs. Pim, who helped to nurse him, "they want to bury me before I am dead, but I am not going to die yet."

"I felt him," she says, "to be such a loving personal friend, remembering my interests and joys, and always ready to share them. I long to leave as the lesson of his life the words, 'Follow him as he followed Christ.'"

It seems a proof of unusual energy that a man in his eighty-fifth year, ordered to lie in a horizontal position, should write as much as he did.

We get a glimpse of his thankful spirit when we read the following words in his diary for the 8th of December, 1890: "It is a great relief to sit up for a little space, supported by pillows, and write these lines. This kind of exercise has been of late with painfulness and weariness, but abounding are the mercies by which I am continually surrounded by night and by day."

It was now Mr. Anderson's desire that there should be a consultation with a physician. Isaac Sharp graphically describes the visit of this fresh doctor. "Dr. — came about 5.30 p.m. Tall, *pronounced* in look, action, and fact, statuesque, not a facial muscle stirring, yet, with marked regard and attention, he respectfully listened to Dr. Anderson as he narrated the case. Then came an examination with prescriptions. Dr. Anderson told me the specialist could not allow of my journeying."

He much enjoyed a call from Mr. Samuel Anderson, brother of the doctor, which he describes as a "delightfully refreshing visit. We conversed together and united together in vocal prayer and parted with much love with a kiss of brotherhood. I believe in the communion of saints."

On the following day we find him writing: "I was rather taken aback yesterday on my kind friend J. R. Pim telling me that he had written to J. B. B. to say that he did not see his way to go with me out of France. My own belief is that the doctors have thoroughly scared him with their *dictum*. I am not discouraged; the time is not yet,

and when it comes the Lord will provide. . . . The watches are not watches of weariness, for the peace of the Prince of Peace is over all. It is marvellous to me to be able thus to write, but not to do so would involve a sad deficiency on the part of a witness-bearer to the tender love and mercy of the Lord."

On the 14th of December he remarks in a letter to the London Committee: "I gather from Captain Pim that my dear friends of the Committee would feel greatly relieved to hear that I had concluded to return to England. This cuts very deep just now. . . . Although perfectly powerless even to cross the room alone, I still look forward hopefully to some improvement ere long. . . . I cheerfully accept, however, your implied recall. . . . My hand trembles somewhat. With much love and a renewal of my grateful thanks for all your solicitude and kindness, I am lovingly,

"Your affectionate friend,

"ISAAC SHARP."

Next day the old man's heart is cheered by a letter from his friend Dr. Nason, of Stratford-on-Avon, which he describes as being "valuable, kind, and Christian in its character: a letter to do me good. My heart desponds and I feel thankful for it as a word in season."

It was at this time a relief to him to remember that the certificate for foreign service now in his possession had been granted him by no less a body than the Meeting on Ministry and Oversight of the Friends' Yearly Meeting held in London in May, 1890, and although that year had not yet run its course, he looked forward expectantly to the Yearly Meeting of May, 1891, and to its decision on the question at issue, when in solemn conclave met. Meanwhile he writes: "I need a further revelation than any yet granted me, voluntarily to abandon the post graciously assigned me, as I still venture to believe, by the Lord Jesus, that Great and Good Shepherd of the sheep. With Him we know is

the sovereign right in perfect wisdom to say : ' It is enough,' and I know how He is able to grant me grace to hearken and obey. But I no more dare or desire to *ask for a release* than that the days of preparation for the possible service yet before me be shortened. . . . So here I rest, not knowing what the issue may be in the not far distant future : for life or death, for suffering or for service. . . . The feeling (amongst Friends) may be more extensive than I am aware of : ' It is too late in the day ; he had better give it up.' I abide in the unshaken confidence that He who raised Lazarus from the dead is able, if it pleaseth Him, to renew my strength as the eagle's and yet enable me to fulfil my service or *clearly release me from it.*"

About this time we find him confiding to his diary an unusual state of mind : " I confess to myself feeling a little on the sombre side, with the doctor's words, 'Three months.' But I soon made up my mind that perhaps it may be ordered otherwise by the Lord. Moreover my shaky condition told of still being far down in the scale, but hope, blessed hope, was soon again in the ascendant. . . . I long to put an end to this costly Parisian daily expenditure. . . . As early as frost makes it reasonably practicable I hope to re-cross the Channel."

Meanwhile his pen was busy still, and at times his heart was cheered by letters of comprehending and stimulating sympathy. One of these he thus acknowledges : " My dear nephew, J. W. Procter,—It would not be easy for me to express in words the real comfort thy long letter gave me, and still gives me." On the 27th of December he tells the London Committee that he hopes to reach England as early in the following month as wind, weather, and his physical condition would allow. " For this I wait, unruffled by the daily discipline falling to my lot, assured that all is well."

He enjoyed reading " Pax Vobiscum," and also a book kindly given him by Dr. Anderson, which he calls that " little gem, ' Thoughts on Union with Christ,' by H. C. G.

Moule. . . . I am better. The enemy knows it, and seeks to enter in. Lord, by Thy favour, graciously enable me to prevail by the lifting up of Thy standard against him."

For one of his friends he writes a verse for New Year's Day, 1891 :

Work in us Lord, according to Thy will,
Ever Thy gracious purpose to fulfil ;
By Thee, as hitherto, our need supplied,
In height, or depth, whatever may betide ;
In Christ made nigh, Thy Spirit, Lord, our Guide,
Yea, to the end of life, O King, and then
For ever, and for evermore with Thee. Amen.

In a letter to the writer he says : " Satan has been kept at bay by a higher power than his or mine, and I have been very happy. To the Lord be the praise."

His nurse had now left him, but he alludes to the kind help given by " J. R. P. and his wife, always watchful and efficient, . . . active and energetic, very, beyond her strength."

CHAPTER XIII.

“ Let me not think an action mine own way,
But as Thy love shall sway,
Resigning up the rudder to Thy skill.

* * * *

—since Thou canst not choose but see my actions,
So great are Thy perfections,—
Thou mayst as well my actions guide as see.”

George Herbert.

“ He who is in Christ confiding,
All his hope in Him does place,
Is upon the rock abiding,
Is a happy child of grace.
Happy, for his Lord is leading,
Christ, his Shepherd, guides his ways,
Grants him all that he is needing,
Fills his heart with wondering praise.”

Author unknown.

ON the 5th of January, 1891, Isaac Sharp writes in his Parisian diary : “ Read in bed after breakfast the Epistle of Jude, and felt comforted and refreshed in a measure of deep communion. It took this turn. Would I prefer to be gathered up now or to stay and fulfil the service so long in prospect ? And I felt, oh so preciously, I would rather leave it to the Lord to decide than have any choice of my own in it, and therein I felt comforted, believing, nevertheless, that the end is not yet.

“ Then came forcibly to mind my present condition concerning the so-called *incurable*, and I felt that although hitherto liberty to pray for healing had not been given me

(whether from lack of faith, or for my own deep teaching, or both, I am not clear), yet, doubtless, He who made, with whom is all power, can restore, and I was comforted, and so I desire to await any further unfolding."

Five days later, he says in a letter to his name-sake nephew: "I am still progressing, and almost marvel at myself in being so soon raised up from a very *manifestly low estate*, lower than my kind friends knew, and perhaps a wee lower than I knew myself."

It was a joy to him to be able to attend the little meeting of the Society of Friends in Paris, and to visit and take part in some of the Protestant mission work of that city. Of Justine Dalencourt he says: "I was deeply interested with a brief outline of the experiences of her early life. Educated as a Roman Catholic and imbibing strongly an adverse view of Protestantism, she nevertheless had a thoughtful mind and remembers when, I think, not more than six years old, praying in secret to the Lord. Her brother, a fine young Frenchman, Lieutenant Bellot, perished in Arctic research. There is a monument in England to his memory, and 'Bellot Strait' perpetuates his name in the icy north. Someone told his sister that he was a Protestant; at this she was unhappy for he loved the forbidden book, the Bible. He left a manuscript narrative written in English, and she thought she would learn that language, and so be able to peruse it. As the sister of Lieutenant Bellot, she was invited to a private gathering of Arctic explorers. This was held at the house of a Protestant and while Justine Dalencourt was praying in her heart for the conversion of the lady of that household, that lady was at the same time yearning in spirit for the conversion of her young visitor. By degrees light broke in upon her mind. Clearness of vision was granted her, rather with heaven-sent tuition than by outward means; and in process of time, having embraced the Gospel of our Lord in its simplicity and in the fulness of her heart, the Church of her early days was abandoned for a purer

faith. Ultimately she applied for membership in the Society of Friends and was received. For many years she has been a most diligent labourer in the vineyard of the Lord."

On the 23rd of January, 1891, Isaac Sharp returned to England. We get a glimpse of a grateful heart when we read in his entry for the 26th, the following words: "A wonderful night for periods of undisturbed rest." He was going at 11 a.m. on that day to the "Morning Meeting," an important meeting of the Society of Friends held three times a year in London, especially taking cognizance of ministerial service in foreign countries. "About 10 o'clock," he says, "I opened the Testament for a word of confirmation and help, and read, at a glance, and drank in as I read: 'Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do Thou knowest not now, but Thou shalt know hereafter,' and I felt that in many things and in many ways the day of full revealing has not yet come!"

Later in the day, after telling his correspondent that the "Morning Meeting" had been held that day, he adds: "J. B. B. suggested my giving a little outline of recent experiences which I did, having previously knelt in prayer. Friends listened with deep and loving interest and with no small amount of sympathy. It felt right to finish off by saying, 'So I return to Ettington, expecting to spend a little time there in watching and waiting for the further unfolding of heavenly counsel, and I do so in the entire absence of any anxiety, to the Lord be the praise.' . . . The recovery has been so rapid that I brought back to Cannon Street four pounds of muscle more than I took from thence to Paris."

At his home at Ettington he had a call from Dr. Nason, who was most kind in his inquiries. "He put his hand," says Isaac Sharp, "with a professional squeeze to the calves of my legs to feel if they were flabby and lo, he found them firm." A little later he writes: "Enjoyed the perusal of 'Pilgrims in Palestine' by Violet Hodgkin, this

second time fully as much as the first. On the frontispiece is the following quotation :

‘ Give me my scallop shell of quiet,
My staff of faith to walk upon.

Sir W. Raleigh.’

Behold I sorely need it all to-day ! A day of searching, deep, very deep. Oh, so deep. My help, O Lord, is in Thee. Blessed be Thy name for evermore.”

Early in March we find the following entry : “ I feel just now equal to face almost any amount of discouragement, being manifestly sustained and upheld by the power of the Lord. Of this I was made very conscious this morning, while sensible in very tenderness of close communion, (as I dare believe) by the power of the Holy Spirit, as brought by *anticipation* face to face with the Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Oversight. ‘ Thou shalt surely go ’ is revived with considerable force, unsought, and with it a reverent sense that the Lord Jesus will be very graciously my Helper then.”

Again he writes of how one of his friends, like many others, would fain cut out work for him nearer home. *A propos* of this he says : “ Were I a husbandman and sent my man into the fields to scare the crows, and he thought it would be better to go and plant potatoes, surely small thanks would he be entitled to at eventide.” In April he writes : “ I am still in the plastic state, not having been overtaken altogether with the fossiliferous from which I desire preservation while anything further, in the merciful ordering of the Lord, remains to be accomplished. To the surprise of the doctors, I am in general health wonderfully well. I am looking forward to next month with solemnity, yet in the loving-kindness of the Lord, free from anxiety. My committee do not feel warranted to say—as to any further foreign travel—either ‘ go ’ or ‘ give up.’ The ‘ Meeting for Sufferings ’ with all its power would scarcely incline to veto the decision of the Yearly Meeting

on Ministry and Oversight of 1890. So it seems likely that the said assembly for 1891 will *confirm* or *cancel*. Looking unto Jesus, I await the issue fearlessly."

Again the God-given strength of faith was to be strongly tried. The meeting to which he alludes as the time of decision was to take place on the 19th of May. On the 13th he writes: "For more than two weeks I was held fast in the influenza trail, and for ten days could neither read nor write without distress. . . . To-day for the first time I have been fully dressed and out in the fresh air for a little space. At present I cannot bear much, but right over the head and shoulders of the doctor I have all along cherished the expectancy of being at 'Devonshire House' at 10 a.m., on the 19th, at the Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Oversight when my certificate will come under revision. I deeply feel the intensely unique individuality of my position. . . . I am wonderfully easy in spirit. The Lord is on the watch and He, sitting on the flood, is over all, *King for ever*. Oh what an amount of discouragement has arisen; two severe illnesses in twelve months, physicians in severe antagonism, a *short* journey, say they, and a long sleep. But all this grows pale when face to face with the query, *What saith the Master?* From Him I catch no bugle note from the heavenly armoury to surrender, to lay the armour down."

The day of decision drew near, and on that preceding it, the 18th of May, Isaac Sharp wrote from a London Hotel to his daughter: "I left Ettington four days ago. I did not feel strong enough to travel alone, so I took Nurse C. with me, to help me on my way, and her night watch was continued till the 16th, when she returned to Ettington, and my brother arrived. I am very glad to have him with me, and we both enjoy it. I did not cross the threshold yesterday. . . . I have felt a determined effort must be made to be in my place in the meeting. A *written appeal* is a very different thing from the living voice, and I am well satisfied my absence would, with some, have run

the thermometer down to zero. A few more hours and we shall see. Meanwhile I am wonderfully easy in spirit.

"Curiously enough I enjoy London and it suits me. Generally I feel more buoyant there than elsewhere. . . . As I write my grandsons, major and minor, rise up before me. My dear love to each and all ; my grand-daughters having a large share in my often remembrance. If it be for the best we shall meet again, and there I peacefully leave it in loving expectancy. . . . As for myself there is plenty before me in preparation for a long journey, should it be so. I ought to go (they say) prepared for sudden illness, and sudden return of my local ailment. . . . It is very wonderful that I am looking forward in joyous expectancy without one anxious thought."

On the 20th of May he began a note with the words : "Feeble and faint and tremulous from influenza and the watches of the night, I stood before the Yearly Meeting yesterday. The Lord was graciously near, and the words were once more fulfilled, 'My God shall supply all your need,' and my heart rejoiced in the renewal of strength as for well nigh half-an-hour I pleaded with the gathered church."

Early in the meeting a member of the committee, with Isaac Sharp's concurrence, read a letter from a well-known English doctor expressing views strongly adverse to his starting on a foreign journey, and also alluded to the similar opinion of the French physicians.

Then the aged man arose. One who was present writes : "I was well aware how the late attack of influenza had taken hold of him, but was also aware of the hopeful way in which he regarded the issue, and to-day's decision, and how calmly he awaited its probabilities and possibilities. Beginning with the words, 'Tremulous and feeble I stand before you,' he went on from first to last with a vigour and eloquence of style that I have never known him surpass. There was no feebleness of voice excepting now and then when, checked by rising emotion, he brought out

the salient points of his well-connected, well-woven fabric of narrative and argument with an earnestness and emphasis that little betokened the weight of years of the speaker. He alluded to the discouragements heaped upon him from every direction, 'line upon line, precept upon precept,' here a little, and there a great deal, but, through all, his faith had not wavered. He was loyally ready to hand back the certificate he held in his pocket if the meeting chose to withdraw it, but voluntarily he could not surrender."

Another friend writes : "No one could withstand the eloquence, zeal and devotion of spirit of the aged apostle, as he poured forth in impassioned language his firm conviction that the call to go forth on his great missionary journey was still sounding in his spiritual ear, and that he had faith to believe that all would be over-ruled to this end. It was a time of intense interest and solemnity ; and the setting forth of his trust in God, of his experience of the Lord's dealings with him, of the blessed assurance of His love and tender communion with Him, will never be forgotten by many who heard his appeal."

The close of his address was a thrilling one : "Among other things it has been said, 'He would be a bold man who would go with me as companion. . . . Friends, rather than be delayed for want of a companion I would go forth alone. The Lord who has given me a shield of faith, and not a very small one, would give me a girdle too, and place a helmet on my head, and then would lead me forth and give me in measure to realise the words, 'the Father is with me.' You are about to enter the presence chamber of the King. May He give you a judgment there, and, whatever the outcome, it is my earnest desire the decision may be to the honour of the Father and to the glory of Christ."

In meetings for the affairs of the Church the ideal of the Society of Friends is that the subjects which come before them for decision should not be mere matters of

discussion ; but that, unitedly and prayerfully, the will of the Lord should be so sought that the experience of the Early Church may be realised, "*It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us.*"

The Editor of "The Friends' Quarterly Examiner," thus describes the scene: "So strong and triumphant was his faith that he carried the meeting with him ; and it was felt that nothing had really transpired to cancel the certificate granted a year ago. Reference was made by a Friend to the case of Paul and Silas who 'essayed to go into Bithynia but the Spirit suffered them not,' with the suggestion that this might be a parallel case. . . . But we were also reminded of another instance in the life of the Apostle Paul when he remonstrated with those who would hold him back from the path of duty : 'What ! mean ye to weep and to break mine heart, for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.' Such was the attitude of our aged Friend who was prepared to go on, come health, come sickness, come life, come death, in the service of Him who he believed had called him to the work. . . . The whole scene was a striking object-lesson on the truth of individual guidance.

"As one said, it seemed to take us back to the times of George Fox and the early Friends, when such incidents were common, and when, like the disciples of old, they counted not their lives dear unto themselves."

The Head Master of Ackworth School spoke of what he should have to tell the young people under his care of the faith of the aged brother, more than twice his own age. The author of "Quaker Strongholds," speaking only on the spiritual side of the matter, being, she said, quite incapable of dealing with the physical, told of the ray of light that beamed upon her soul when the matter was introduced a year earlier and often times since. One after another rose and said it was their judgment that the meeting dare not take upon itself the responsibility of holding him back.

To quote again from a letter written on the following day: "There were some beautiful sentiments uttered as the dear man sat with his face buried in his handkerchief as he felt that the way was clearing for him. So now he is left in the Lord's hands, and we shall see how things go with him."

An admirable minute was drawn up by Jonathan Backhouse Hodgkin, and the certificate of 1890 was endorsed with a copy of this minute, which suitably alluded to the objections raised, and very properly embodied the exercise of the meeting. Dr. R. H. Thomas, of Baltimore, said he thought there had been in that meeting a striking illustration of the leading of the Holy Spirit, and hoped it would impress the minds of the young.

The view taken by doctors was one that no one could be surprised at. They said that at any time he might need the aid of a skilful surgeon and of a trained nurse, and that the strain of travel might cause a complete breakdown. But, as Isaac Sharp pleaded, while they did well to give their professional prohibition, they did not and could not add, "It seems good to the Holy Ghost and to us." Much of what they anticipated came to pass. Life was to tremble in the balance, and while the broad ocean lay between the old man and his native land. But where was this? Not in Turkey, not in India, not in Japan, not in Mexico, not in China, but of all places in the wide world it was at the house of his daughter in California. Surgical skill was needed, and imperatively needed, but it was at hand; a trained nurse was wanted, and a trained nurse was supplied. To the praise of God be it said, "There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken . . . all came to pass."

To his daughter he now writes: "What if the *ideal* should some day give place to the real in the year of uncertainty, 189—. *If it be for the best* we shall meet again. . . . It is very wonderful that I am looking forward in joyous expectancy without one anxious thought. Kindly

say so to my dear friends Joel and Hannah Bean." Soon afterwards he makes a poetical entry in his journal :

For this, O Lord, I pray,
 Preserve me all the way,
 And with a heaven-sent ray—
 Jesus my strength and stay—
 O, guide from day to day !
 Lord Christ for this I pray.

In familiar correspondence with his niece S., who had filled a daughter's place in the home of his sister, Mrs. Dunning, at Broadstairs, he writes in reference to his journey : " Some of my friends still look drearily at it. Others say, ' And dost thou really think of going ? ' ' Why not ? ' is my Quaker rejoinder. One thing is quite clear, if the old hull fails to sail steadily it will not be for want of ballast. But the watchword lovingly given fails not : ' Set thy face as a flint,' and I need it still. But in the inner depths there is a calm, placid and deep, and over it in the clear blue I read, ' Fear not.' To the Lord be the praise. . . . "

It was arranged that Dr. Henry Appleton should be his companion as far as Constantinople. Notwithstanding his executive habits, he found the pressure of preparation and correspondence great as the time for departure drew near ; but he writes : " A sustaining power is over all, and the secret utterance arises in my heart, ' Thou art in league with me, O Lord ; graciously help me to be abiding in league with Thee, that so all may be well now and for ever.' "

As the day of departure was at hand he wrote :

We meet and part
 Hoping to meet again ;
 But when and where
 Who may declare ?
 Meantime, deeper by far
 Than human ken,
 Breathe we our loving part,
 Each from the other's heart,
 Farewell, farewell till then.

On his "Farewell Sabbath," the 13th of September, he writes in his diary : "At this eleventh hour comes welling up the query, After all am I really willing to be laid aside, and the vision of many days be made to fade away? Honestly I believe I am, but only under the subduing and sanctifying power of the Lord. . . . Then arose a deeply solemn thought : Art thou willing to be snuffed out, like the snuffing out of a candle-wick in the darkness, and leave no likeness of a trace behind in the utter extinguishment for angels or men, whereof to take knowledge? and, lo, the prompt response arises in my heart, 'Yea, Lord, if it be for Thy glory!'"

A quiet farewell meeting was held at the house of Joseph Bevan Braithwaite, in which allusion was made to a letter received from Isaac Brown, written in almost apostolic language, in which he spoke of Paul being accompanied by "the beloved physician," and expressed his joy that Isaac Sharp was to have a medical companion.

From Vienna Isaac Sharp writes : "We got to this hotel through adventure and mis-adventure, and I was glad of a roost, among the small hours, after a journey day by day of considerable stress and strain, which I was enabled to bear without a flinch. Yesterday morning we had a very nice meeting with about eight of the forty colporteurs of the British and Foreign Bible Society, men of sterling worth. It did me good to see them, and offer from my very heart words of hope and consolation, and to greet them as fellow-labourers in the Lord. The Superintendent kindly suggested that they should meet this evening at the Young Men's Christian Association Rooms at the hour of seven, when the young people assemble, and that a few Christian people should be invited to join them. I pray the Lord to own and bless the gathering, and have faith to believe that in mercy and heavenly love *He will!* I am favoured to feel singularly well."

At Philippopolis, Isaac Sharp and Dr. Appleton were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Tonjoroff, the latter an English lady and a member of the Society of Friends.

Isaac Sharp writes: "Her ability and mental and physical power are very remarkable. Her hospital of thirteen beds and hundreds of out-patients, and her well-known work in other ways, have won for her the unique consent of the Government in allowing her to administer what is needful direct from her dispensary. No other practitioner, however eminent, has power to do so, but must prescribe and then go or send to the chemist to have the prescription made up. She has had some wonderful cases, and the death-rate is remarkably low. John Tonjoroff took us to see the prison, to which he has access. Many prisoners wore a heavy chain on one leg. Some were sentenced for short terms, others for from three to fourteen years, or for life. It was very striking to see how their countenances brightened as he spoke a few words to them and gave them a hand-grasp.

"At 4.30 p.m. we went to the Friends' meeting. About six months ago it was found desirable to gather together under closer fellowship some of the attenders of the Morning Gospel Meeting, and to identify them more closely as in sympathy with the doctrines of Christianity as held by Friends. Thousands of Henry Stanley Newman's tract, "The Friends," were put into circulation before they were interdicted, the very interdiction making all sorts and conditions of men the more eager to read for themselves. When the Government officers came to seize the residue, very few were left. . . . J. A. and E. B. Tonjoroff were profuse in their expressions of thankfulness for the visit, the latter kindly saying, in effect, 'If as refreshing in other places as the visit has been here, many will have cause to be thankful, for it was of the Lord.' . . . She is a remarkable woman. Once in Macedonia, in a time of great excitement and blood-thirstiness, she was instrumental in the hand of the Lord in saving the lives of twelve of the principal men of the place when about to be slaughtered by misguided Turks. In the midst of a Turkish council she stood fearlessly, pleaded for them and prevailed, backed by documents from headquarters."

At Constantinople, he writes : " Here much might be said, leaving more untold. At the home of Dr. Dobrashian and his wife (daughter of Charles Gillett) we are most kindly tended. . . . Of oppression and depression, I have rarely known the like, possibly a heaven-sent discipline for the work before me. There may have been a good deal of the physical in it. But I am better now. No one about me has gauged the depth, nor was it needful. I have never felt for one moment like turning back or '*caving in.*' All this I accept as of the loving-kindness of the Lord."

In a letter to J. B. Hodgkin, written a week later, he says : " I have been wonderfully and very graciously sustained amid very deep proving by night and by day. To the Lord be the praise."

In his diary he writes of going " with May Dobrashian, baby, and nurse, to Yenimahli on the Bosphorus, a fine day, warm and breezy. The little ones were rustivating with their grandfather Sukias Dobrashian. We were most kindly welcomed. I went for a walk with him and had a fine view of the Bosphorus nearly to the entrance of the Black Sea. As I walked side by side with one of the chosen of the Lord, at one time buffeted, boycotted, imprisoned, for his Master's sake, fifteen years my junior, but not with fifteen years more apparent vitality, deep thought came over me with deeper feeling as my eye rested on the blue waters before us and the deeper blue above, and over my spirit came a sense of the *still deeper blue* above the floating clouds and the boundaries of time, to which I could humbly and thankfully believe we were journeying."

After an allusion to Dr. Baedeker's visits to Russian prisons and to Siberia, Isaac Sharp writes in his diary : " The terrible cruelty, oppression, and wrong is enough to raise the cry, ' Lord, how long ? ' The groans of a groaning creation, like the waves of the sea, appear to rise and fall through the long centuries, and still they rise and

fall with sadness evermore. But there is a limit, for the Lord reigneth and He is over all."

In a letter to a nephew he refers to a cold, which "culminated in a chill after a delightful visit to Dr. Dobrashian's father. . . . Taking my breakfast in bed and remaining there till after dinner, I was quite able and willing and ready to rise and meet the officers of the Medical Mission, who came by invitation, took afternoon tea, and then sat down in silence, broken by an Armenian Christian (I think) in prayer. I followed with considerable freedom and was interpreted for by Dr. Giragoshian, honoured and beloved. I spoke for some time, and after a short silence Dr. Giragoshian knelt in prayer, the spirit of which I believe was graciously over us. Thus far, opportunities have presented for religious engagement more than equal to my expectancy. I feel deeply the grave character of such an undertaking at eighty-five, 'but the Lord reigneth.'"

The prevalence of cholera in Syria was soon to necessitate a change of plans, and this disappointment came to Isaac Sharp when he was ill with a cold. He writes: "The shutting up of the route to Beyrout by the enforcement of the quarantine hung over me as a pall. . . . Shortly before rising, came as a gentle whisper, alike soothing and refreshing, 'Call upon Me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.' With it came a renewal of hope with quiet confidence and I was comforted."

In his diary he writes of a call on the son of an Armenian Roman Catholic priest, Pastor Stepamian, who had forty years earlier been one of the first to form the nucleus of Armenian Protestant dissent. "He informed me," writes Isaac Sharp, "that when, I think, not more than eleven or twelve he found among his father's books a New Testament. This appears to have taken the boy by surprise. He read Matthew x. and xi., and light broke in upon his mind, 'not,' he said, 'by preaching, not by discoursing about the things of God, but by the unfolding

of the Spirit of the Lord.' It is noteworthy that his father, *the priest*, received that New Testament from a colporteur."

When writing in his diary of one of his visits to the Friends' meeting, Isaac Sharp says: "Dr. Giragoshian sat beside me, and, when the time came for it, was my able interpreter, 'in the life,' so it felt to me, and I was thankful for it. 'Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.' This was the rejoicing expectancy of old when the children of Israel went three times a year to the city of the great King for worship and thanksgiving. Shall our expectancy be less concerning the heavenly Jerusalem, the everlasting dwelling place of the King of kings? Shall we not rather so walk before Him day by day that we may look forward in expectant faith and say of the holy city, in all lowliness, yet triumphantly, 'Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem'?"

When visiting "Robert College," in an address to the students, he said: "It is a good thing for all of us to begin the day with God. . . . But if you and I have begun this day with God, it was before we came together here. It is good to begin the day with God, before Satan has time to enter in as he seeks to do, and to interpose between us and Christ. The command and promise are often found together in Scripture, '*Draw nigh unto God and He will draw nigh unto you.*' Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

In a letter to a nephew, some ten days later, he says: "A few days ago I had a terrific fall. Dr. Dobrashian looks at it as a remarkable escape without a broken limb. In coming down the stairs, which are winding, five steps from the floor I *heeled over* and came with a heavy thud, head first, on the last step, probably, and then rolled forward on to the floor. My forehead was grazed, a skin-deep cut on the knee, and my hand was severely bruised and became swollen. There was also a strain."

Dr. Appleton now returned home, and Dr. Dixon soon arrived to accompany Isaac Sharp to India and Japan.

In his next letter, again alluding to his fall, he says : " I have wonderfully recovered, and there is nothing to prevent my friend Dr. Dixon and myself setting out to-morrow and steaming away for Port Said, *en route* for Bombay."

In his diary, he says : " Dr. Giragoshian has been my able interpreter from week to week. I alluded to the Syrian flock and the inability to get there. He expressed his belief that my detention here was providential. He could not explain it altogether, but signified that some of their best members had been very desirous that someone would come to tarry awhile with them."

To a nephew he writes : " I am thankful to be in good case. It is my joy and strength and solace to remember, ' The Lord reigneth and He is over all, so undaunted and hopeful I venture on and *Trust !* '"

" Trust " meant so much to him, that he frequently spelt the word with a capital " T."

" Thrice blest is he to whom is given
The instinct that can tell
That God is on the field when He
Is most invisible."*

He does not forget to ask his nephew to get a Noah's ark to send to the children of the home where he had been a guest at Constantinople.

Their mother, G. M. Dobrashian, writes : " We felt it a great privilege having him with us so long. We were much needing cheer and comfort in many ways just then, and he was a most kind sympathiser. It was specially pleasant to me having him, as he knew and had travelled with my grandfather, Edwin O. Tregelles, and one day after going with me and the children to see their grandfather Dobrashian, he wrote in my album a little account of how and when and where he met the four generations, which will be very interesting to the children when they are grown older. Almost every evening he enjoyed a

* Faber.

Turkish bath, and he would come home about ten o'clock so bright and up to anything, and used to ask Dr. Dobrashian if he was ready for a three or four-mile walk, and during supper he would tell stories of his travels and visits to other lands, and often used to say how much he thought of woman and woman's work, and how highly he estimated womanhood."

CHAPTER XIV.

“‘Teach me to do THY will, O God.’ A whole life can be built up on that one vertebral column, and then when all is over, ‘he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.’”—*Professor Drummond*.

“Nothing can make life pleasant but some kind of acquiescence in the present hour, from the consciousness that we are in it according to the order of God, either doing or suffering His will, or, at least, not acting contrary to it.”—*Thomas Adam*.

ON December 10th, 1891, Isaac Sharp writes : “It was a wonderful passage from Constantinople to Alexandria, lake-like and beautiful exceedingly. The Red Sea has been aptly described or likened to a lapis lazuli blue. I had been feeling remarkably well and very happy, but soon after embarking on board the Anchor Line Steamer *Arabic*, I became *seriously* ill, of which I do not mean to say much, but leave my dear friend Dr. Dixon to give his medical version of it. But I may say, that, during the eleven or twelve days and nights in my horizontal position—the cabin being between 80° and 90° *plus* hot fomentations night and day—I was graciously enabled to hold the fort with a flying banner, *No surrender*, and I do not think the dear doctor saw much trace of the proverbial *white feather*. Blood temperature over 103° for a short time, pulse eighty, and sometimes feeble, appetite nil. In the providence of our Heavenly Father we were able to secure the cabin of

the stewardess, just then vacated by two ladies who landed at Port Said. . . . It was a sudden return of the Paris attack." . . .

From a Bombay paper we quote the following account of a meeting : "A very pleasant gathering was held on Tuesday evening on the premises of *The Bombay Guardian*, to meet Isaac Sharp, a venerable minister of the Society of Friends, and his travelling companion Dr. Dixon. After a social hour Mr. M. Mody took the chair. Isaac Sharp gave an account of the Lord's leadings with respect to this journey, and of his prospect of further service, with some interesting incidents of providential leading in connection with the Moravian Mission in Greenland. He desired to impress upon those present the deep importance of so dwelling in the love of CHRIST as to hear His guiding voice constraining or restraining in all the affairs of life."

On the last day of 1891 Isaac Sharp writes : "I am greatly blessed in the assured belief of being in the lot of the Lord's appointment. But *at home* or *from home*, the saying is true, 'we walk by faith and not by sight.' In this wonderful India, the way and work of Satan are largely manifest, and so are the way and work of the Lord. Dr. Dixon has been a great comfort to me, and a valuable fellow-labourer."

From a Calcutta paper, *The Indian Witness*, we learn that, "Among the young men at the Missionary Conference was a Missionary of the Society of Friends, who is above eighty-five years of age. This gentleman having visited extensively among missions in different parts of the world, is at present passing through India. Though acknowledging to eighty-five years, his personal appearance is not more venerable than some men at fifty-eight, and when he stood up to speak it was evident that the stiffness of age had reached to neither tongue, nor brain, nor heart."

With respect to the visit to Sehore, Charles D. Terrell of the Friends' Foreign Mission wrote : "We have very much enjoyed the visit of Isaac Sharp and Dr. Dixon, and

feel it has been a real help to us in our spiritual life, as well as in our mission work. Isaac Sharp spoke to the lepers, as well as to the prisoners in the gaol, and to our children in the schools, also at an open-air meeting, whilst I did my best at interpreting for him. The lepers were specially pleased with his visit. As he told them of the love of God offered to each of them, and gave his testimony to the faithfulness of that love, several were much touched. Altogether, his visit to us, and his messages of God's love and salvation cannot fail to bring forth some real fruit. The universal feeling amongst the natives seemed to be that of surprise and pleasure, that God, our Father, had so wonderfully upheld and blessed His servant, and enabled him to travel so far in service for Him."

Mrs. Terrell writes : " On the day Isaac Sharp and Dr. Dixon arrived, my husband went to meet them at the Bhopal Station. He had hired a native cart for his drive, but the horse and the trap both gave out when about nine miles from Bhopal, and my husband was obliged to shoulder his coat and walk the remaining distance. About a mile from the city he met our expected guests driving towards him, and stopping them explained the reason of being late. Dear old Isaac Sharp was so concerned at my husband's evident fatigue, that he insisted on driving back to the station for him to have some refreshment before making a new start.

" No very special incidents stand out in my memory in regard to his visit to Sehore, only the general impression of his genial, loving words, and bright way of acting and speaking. He was so pleased with the ease with which one of us could interpret for him. He knew just the length that sentences should be, and used simple phrases, so that it made the work of interpretation a delightful one. I can see him now as he sat in the verandah of the School Mission House, early in 1892, distributing the prizes to the girls of my school, gifts sent out by the Missionary Helpers' Union. I remember when once at dinner the lamp was

too strong for his eyes, he seemed so sorry to have to ask us to remove it to a little distance, as if he feared that such a tiny thing as rather less light on the table should be a sacrifice for his sake. . . . All this loving thoughtfulness for others endeared him wherever he went. He was so free from anything of self."

At Hoshangabad, the travellers were kindly entertained by Samuel and Anna Baker. Amongst other portions of the mission work the Jumerati Day School for native girls, conducted by Anna L. Evens and the late Elizabeth Jackson, was visited, and is described as "a grand work." In the Friends' meeting Isaac Sharp spoke from the text, "He shall save His people from their sins."

On the 16th of January the Friends arrived at Sohagpur, where they received a warm welcome from John H. and Effie Williams.

In a letter, dated 18th October, 1897, the former writes in reference to this visit: "The recollection of it forms a very bright and happy memory, and will long continue to do so. Isaac Sharp's cheerful and always ready testimony for his Divine Master, so simply and lovingly told, carrying with it power because of its simplicity, soon won the hearts of all who came in touch with him, European missionaries and native Christian mission helpers as well. Soon after the Friends arrived at Hoshangabad our Quarterly Meeting was held at Seoni Malwa.

"It is our custom at such times, when all our missionaries who can come are present, for our European members to gather together to spend a time in prayer, thanksgiving, and praise. That night we met in the sitting-room of Joseph and Kate Taylor in the mission-house. Our aged brother sat with the open Bible before him at the head of our little meeting, and I think none of us will ever forget the blessedly solemn feeling which came over us, and the sweet sense of a divine overshadowing felt by all, as our venerated friend, with much emotion, read the 103rd Psalm. He had a message of loving encouragement for the

little missionary band, and his words of sympathy and fatherly counsel were stored away in hearts, long to be remembered.

“He did not spare himself. All our mission stations were visited, several days being usually devoted to each. Social opportunities were always very enjoyable, Isaac Sharp’s wonderful fund of anecdote and varied experience in many lands securing for him eager and attentive listeners. How delighted our Christian native brethren were with opportunities frequently made for them to gather together to hear their kind friend tell some of his truly wonderful experiences in Labrador and other far-off lands, always giving God the praise, and ever gratefully remembering His never-failing willingness and power to keep all those who trust Him fully. Isaac Sharp’s voice was often heard in our meetings for worship. Availing himself of the willing services of a missionary or of one of our educated native helpers, as an interpreter, he would have some stirring, helpful, and precious-inspiring truths to lay upon the hearts of his hearers. And how eagerly they would drink in his utterances.

“Not to the Friends’ Mission did he confine himself. His true missionary heart was large enough to embrace all missions. It was my privilege to take our friends to visit the missionary brethren of the ‘Disciples of Christ’ Mission in Harda, about ninety miles to the west of Sohagpur. What a warm reception there was for dear Isaac Sharp and his companion, and how eagerly the wise and loving words of the patriarch were listened to! When the parting time came, hearts were too full for utterance, and the eloquent grasp of the hand said what the lips refused to say. Many missions were visited by our dear friends. Wherever they went a warm reception was accorded them. The Gospel of Christ Jesus was lovingly proclaimed, and the hearts of many weary workers were cheered and comforted by the loving, bright, and sympathetic words of our aged friend and his companion.

“From Calcutta and several other places I have received assurances of the great benefit experienced spiritually from these religious gatherings. I believe many of the native brethren will never forget the sight of that happy, earnest face, and the sound of that voice which pleaded with them so eloquently many a time. They often speak of him still, and always with the deepest respect, veneration, and affection.”

These letters from missionaries give us a clearer idea of his service in India than mere extracts from his diary would do. In one of his sermons at Calcutta, where he had been interested in interviews with the “Calcutta Friends,” he remarked: “Many seek to know the doctrine of Christ before they have surrendered in all things to His will.” In reference to a social visit, he says that “after tea a few hymns were sung, and among them the striking, ‘Oh! to be nothing,’ which I never tire of hearing.”

Isaac Sharp and Dr. Dixon attended the Monthly Missionary Conference in the Union Hall, where Dr. Macdonald gladly made way for the former to address those assembled. When called upon by the Chairman to come forward, he asked for a “short time of silence with hearts turned to the Lord for a realised sense of His presence.” He adds: “I had not long to wait. I then proceeded to explain my simple mission of Christian love, and of how I was led into it, as I believed, by the Lord, and that it was to the rejoicing of my heart that way was made for my addressing the company then before me, with a message from the heart, for I had nothing definitely prepared. The Society to which I belong set forth before the people at its rise, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the immediate communication of the Divine Will. This has now come to be a matter of almost individual belief; it is held by those assembled here to-night. But the nearer we live to the Saviour, the more shall we know of His guidance, when the spiritual ear is open to hear, ‘This is the way, walk in it,’ or ‘This is not the way, depart from it.’ . . . The

receptive power needs cherishing. A popular preacher of great power was undergoing a season of comparative unrest. Just then he saw a woman returning from a well with a broken pitcher, but he beheld when she set it down that the poor broken vessel was full to the brim, and then he beheld an image of receptive power and was satisfied. The words of the Lord Jesus are very precious, 'Lo, I am with you alway'—in hope or fear, in triumph or trial. . . . A gentleman, who was present, said to me, 'I remember some of your Friends coming over here many years ago. I heard them speak; I was not a Christian then. *They did me good.*' It is refreshing to hear now and then, after so many days, of the visit of Russell Jeffrey, William Brewin, and Henry Hipsley."

In reference to some of the great changes of temperature encountered in India, Isaac Sharp quotes a doctor's adage: "Old age and *warmth* and *life*; old age and *cold* and *death*."

About this time he writes in his diary the words, "China is much on my heart this morning, and it feels as if I should go there, probably *through a strift*, but go nevertheless."

In a letter, written on February 22nd, 1892, he says: "I am devoutly thankful for the measure of vitality still remaining, and have faith to believe that this, in very love and mercy, will still be granted so long as the need for it shall remain in this service of love; a marvel and a mystery to myself as well as to my friends."

When parting from a fellow-passenger during the voyage to Japan, Isaac Sharp gave him a loving watch-word: "Paul says, 'Lay hold of eternal life.' *With the mind* we lay hold of earthly things; *with the spirit* the things of the heavenly Kingdom. 'The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.' 'Lay hold on eternal life.' May this be thy portion."

The discomforts of a voyage are treated lightly, as when he says : "The air of the ship continues unsavoury, and the water is far from sweet!!" Again he writes, and, let us remember, in his eighty-sixth year : "I have often thought that many at home are doing more for the Lord than falls to my lot. But for each and all is the message of the Lord,

‘Follow thou Me.’

"This morning early, as I lay in my berth, pondering my position somewhat deeply, in view of the present and of that which lies before me, a solemn impress with much tenderness came over my spirit in the consciousness that, however small the service, it is in the appointment of the Lord, and of His ordering, and not of my own devising. . . . A humbling and blessed fulness came with the words, '*For Christ and His Gospel.*'"

A week later he writes : "Never had I so great a sympathy before with John when he sent his disciples to Jesus with the query, 'Art Thou He that should come, or look we for another?' My portion being one so altogether singular and strange, and yet the dear Lord does not suffer me to doubt, as Satan would fain have me do. Blessed be the Name of the Lord ; I have faith to believe, that, amid all this, He will not suffer me to fail, as I look from self to Him !"

In reference to a meeting in the saloon of the steamer he says : "I remarked that whilst some ignore the Bible, and do not believe in it, thousands like-minded have passed away, and *the Bible remains*. Their unbelief does not make the Bible less true. There are mysteries in this one Book our Heavenly Father has given to His children ; but that which is needful for man's salvation, he may run who readeth it ! The Lord Jesus said, 'No man cometh to the Father but by Me' ; and His invitation to-day is the same as when He was on earth, 'Come unto Me.' We may come for pardon and for peace ; we may come for all we need."

Again he writes : " In the course of this day's meditation, it has come before me with convincing clearness that we have in the following a *three-fold cord*, strong in its entirety—

Believe, Receive, Obey."

In a letter to Martha Braithwaite he remarks : " Much lies before me in spiritual vision, which I have faith to believe will yet be accomplished in the ordering of the Lord. Whittier speaks of 'a voice without a sound'; wherein, it seems to me, China is embraced and Syria too. Hath not the Lord said, 'Is anything too hard for Me?' I do not forget that Peter Gardiner died within sight of Scotby on a journey of wonderful experience, nor that C. H. Spurgeon quite expected to proclaim once more from his place in The Tabernacle the Gospel of the Kingdom, but was taken up higher, yet the word of cheer given me fifteen years ago still lives in my heart—

' Forward and fear not,
Let thy faith be firm.'

Herein I humbly trust is no trace of self-confident boasting but rather of *reliant trust*. For lo ! on this wise, a limit to the limitless I may not seek to set in word, or deed, or thought."

On the 16th of March, 1892, the travellers arrived at Yokohama, Japan. Isaac Sharp writes : " George Braithwaite came from the shore in a boat and invited us to his house. . . . In the course of conversation he told us of having handed the little tract, ' John Three, Sixteen,' to a Japanese on a rainy night. The man, it appears, read it eagerly, and notwithstanding the inclement weather, set out and found George Braithwaite, and wanted to know in what book ' John iii. 16 ' could be found and where he could get it. He was told where he could get a Testament, and there is reason to believe that this singularly interesting tract was blessed to a Buddhist in setting before him the Truth as it is in Jesus. George Braithwaite has circulated

this tract widely. It was issued in Japanese by the Religious Tract Society." On the following morning the Friends went on to Tokio, where they were met most kindly by Dr. Whitney, who took them to the Legation House, his home, "where," writes Isaac Sharp, "a cordial welcome awaited us from Mary Caroline Whitney, and we felt most comfortably *at ease*."

Four days later in the diary we come across the words, "China is with me in mental vision abidingly."

In reference to the Scripture Reading Union, in which Mrs. Whitney takes a deep interest, he writes: "It has a membership of over 13,000, who read the portions arranged for the course, and it is probable that 5,000 to 10,000 more follow the same reading although not enrolled as members. Local secretaries are scattered among 800 different places throughout the empire." M. C. Whitney writes: "Isaac Sharp and Dr. Dixon were with us ten days, and a most delightful time we had. Isaac Sharp so cheerful and Dr. Dixon so careful of him. . . . We had our Swedish friends up to tea to meet them and had such a good time. Isaac Sharp spoke most beautifully and appropriately to them, and their hearts and voices re-echoed almost every word he said. There was also a social gathering for the Japanese connected with the Friends' Mission. . . . About forty secretaries of the Scripture Union came here to meet our Friends, and both of them spoke through an interpreter very forcibly and feelingly and we sang the two new hymns that George has had translated with Japanese tunes. I helped M. A. Gundry to prepare for the large company of missionaries we had invited to meet our Friends there. About sixty responded. Willis* made a few introductory remarks and then read Isaac Sharp's certificates from the Monthly, Quarterly, and Yearly Meetings, which seemed both interesting and impressive to the company. Then Isaac Sharp spoke most beautifully and at some length, and Dr. Dixon followed with a few of his

* Dr. Whitney.



ISAAC SHARP AND DR. DIXON IN JAPAN.

bright, encouraging words. Everyone thanked us most warmly afterwards and said what a real refreshment and treat it had been. . . . The time seems all too short for all they want to do and the weather is so very cold that it makes it more difficult for Isaac Sharp to get about. We shall not want to part with them when the time comes. It has been a real privilege to have them under our roof."

More than five years later Miss Gundry bore testimony to the extreme value of Isaac Sharp's visit to Japan, which took place when the mission was in rather low water. "The school-girls all loved him and have grieved over his death. He came to the mission buildings one morning after a fearful fire, when four or five hundred houses had been burnt and the mission premises only just saved. His looks of sympathy as he walked round amongst the refugees, though he could not speak their language, had caused him to be remembered ever since."

On April 2nd Isaac Sharp writes: "At three o'clock twelve of the colporteurs assembled at the Bible House at Yokohama as kindly arranged for by George Braithwaite. They came in from their separate districts and a very interesting occasion it proved to be. Dr. Whitney came down from Tokio to be present, a most welcome addition. 'The portion for the day in 'The Three-fold Cord'—the kind gift of my dear friend Martha Braithwaite—appeared singularly appropriate, and it was read to them in their own language from the Japanese Scriptures.

"'Rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory shall be revealed ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.'

"'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ happy are ye, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.'

"'Thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle. Thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me.' . . .

"Each one as his turn came had his tale to tell, and not a few of them could make mention of trial and triumph

too ; reviled and beaten, stoned and persecuted, the Lord fulfilled His ever present promise, 'As thy days so shall thy strength be.'" After relating other services of one kind and another, he writes on the 12th of April : "Closely engaged in packing. Then we went into the drawing-room for a farewell interview with Dr. and M. C. Whitney. Little Bevan was with us. The Lord graciously granted His blessing, for the sense as of a halo of peace and love was over us. It was to me like sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Words came freely, . . . and I have a hope, will remain with them in refreshing remembrance. After this, I knelt in prayer, in which little Bevan and his younger brother were brought before the Lord, and His favour entreated for them, and for their dear father and mother and household. It was a season for which to be devoutly thankful in the nearness of the love of God in Christ Jesus." On the next day he writes : "Dr. Whitney did us good service in getting our luggage passed without examination, and arranging for a steam launch to convey us to the steamer *Belgic*, whither he, George Braithwaite, and M. A. Gundry kindly bore us company. They inspected our comfortable cabin, and remained a while with us. Then came the inevitable last moments when our farewells were spoken. . . . We watched and waved so long as recognition allowed, and our stately sea-girt citadel set out on her voyage of over 5,000 miles to San Francisco. We got our luggage arranged, and soon began to feel at home. Then I set to work to balance my cash which was successfully accomplished. Many thoughts came welling up concerning the recent past, and as regards China, the possible yet to be. I am favoured to feel calm, with spirit and mind at rest, being wonderfully free from anxiety." In a letter, he says : "I could write much, oh, so much, of this wonderful Japan, and leave the half untold. Five-and-twenty years ago it was a death penalty to profess Christianity. Now it is open to any and to all to do so openly and unmolested."

On the following day he writes : "Wind ahead, but with very little rock or roll, nevertheless two missionaries from China, man and wife, are bed-fast. Their nerves were highly strung in that land, in the recent troubles there. They could not undress, but slept with their clothes on, amid almost overwhelming anxiety. I just looked in to inquire after them, with which they were pleased, and so was I. I read a portion of Scripture, then knelt and commended them to the Lord. Said the wife : 'That is just what I have felt to need all the day.' I read also a portion of Samuel Anderson's vision of Heaven. I feel much for them."

One of the Sunday meetings on ship-board is thus described by Isaac Sharp : "A bell was rung for gathering together in the saloon. The purser beckoned me towards him. Before him were pillows over which a flag was spread, and upon it a Bible was placed. The purser read the portions for the day, including the accustomed prayers. I then rose and said : 'Fellow voyagers on the mighty Pacific, I greet you in the love of Christ on this Easter morning. But there is another voyage with eternity for a landing-stage. Are we prepared for the kingdom and the crown, willingly offered for our acceptance, with power on our part as free agents for acceptance or rejection? We have been reminded that the Father is God, that the Son is God, that the Holy Ghost is God,—incomprehensible, but one God over all! Jesus said when on earth, 'Come unto Me,' and now the gentle voice of the Holy Spirit may be heard saying, 'Come unto Me.' We may come for pardon sealed with peace through the blood of the covenant. The Lord is willing; may we be willing too; so shall it be well with us now and for ever.'"

The diary gives many records of fluctuations in health, need for nursing himself, and for the medical aid of his companion. One day he writes : "We walked on deck; the wind was too strong for my chest, and I had to surrender; a reminder of John Pearson's version of his

trouble from an old-fashioned disease called *Anno Domini*." Again he playfully writes: "Some cayenne pepper improved the circulation. This old and valuable remedy, the benefit of which I have often proved, once more came to the rescue. I did not tell the doctor till after, as he does not believe in cayenne pepper; but what of it? *His* idea concerning cayenne is the logic of theory! Mine concerning cayenne is the *logic of fact*."

Cayenne seems to have been a very favourite medicine, for a week later he says: "Dr. Dixon has little faith in cayenne pepper, and thought I had better try something else. 'The idea of knowing better than the doctor!' So I yielded ignominiously, and suffered for it, taking a dose of camphor instead. Doctor thought ginger would be a good remedy, and most kindly went to order it. One of the waiters came with a tumbler full of a dark-coloured liquid as a substitute, and lo, it was ginger ale! I got him to pour away about four-fifths of it, put in a dash of cayenne, genuine cayenne, and drank it off. Relief came promptly."

On the 21st of April he writes: "China is much before me still; not, I honestly believe, from the working of my own mind and will, but under the guidance of the Lord, by His Spirit, who divideth to every man severally as He will. Possibly even now my committee may be pondering over it. . . . On my own mind there is no sense of discharge from this labour of love. *Should the Lord so order it*, I am made willing to go thither and never return, although not anticipating such an issue. Sweet is the clothing of my spirit to-day."

In allusion to a valuable Sunday address from a Baptist minister on board, on the text, "Thy will be done," he says: "Profound attention was manifested. My heart went with the words he spoke, and I felt thankful for them." About this time Isaac Sharp had a good deal of inconvenience from his ailing sight. He much enjoyed hearing "Mackay of Uganda" read by Dr. Dixon during the

leisure of the voyage. He still persevered in diary keeping, and writes on the 29th of April : " We crossed the ' Bar ' quite early, ruffled but not rough. For the second time through the Golden Gate to California." On the following day he reached Creek Orchard, Berryessa, the home of his daughter, Elizabeth Hjerleid Shelley. Of the parting with Dr. Dixon he writes : " A day of memorial. Rose at six a.m. ; breakfasted at about seven. Then setting aside all pressure for a little space, my dear companion, friend, and adviser and I sat down for our farewell blending. We could praise the Lord for all His goodness and watchful care over us, and with lively faith and hopeful trust, we commended each other to the keeping of the Lord. I went with him in the steamer across the Bay of San Francisco, and bore him company till the last waving of hands gave way to the inevitable sundering." A day or two later he writes : " Dr. Dixon is much on my mind and in my heart with the upspringing, ' The Lord bless thee,' and I thankfully believe *He will*. In the midst of my own kith and kin, and many kind friends ; in the midst, moreover, of young life, the severance is less keen, less severely felt. Yet the sundering of a most helpful companionship is continuously with me. Lizzie drove me to the mid-week meeting. I took my seat and felt the deep solemnity pervading, and the presence of the Lord graciously made manifest in our midst. It was not long before the silence was broken. My spirit was brought into sympathy, as I believed, with some who needed a word of cheer. The devices of Satan were alluded to, in seeking to cast down unduly. Watch ! for the enemy is ever on the watch. Watch and pray lest he prevail. The Lord still says in the secret of the soul, ' Come unto Me,' so we may come under all circumstances, of joy or sorrow, hope or fear, for He is ever present who said, ' Lo, I am with you alway.' Z. followed in a remarkable utterance. . . . Ten years ago he was present at a Yearly Meeting ; our aged Friend Isaac Sharp was there, and what he said was still remem-

bered—"Looking unto Jesus." He had then only joined the Society a year or two before; he had witnessed the pardon of his sins, and was in possession of peace with God through Jesus Christ, but the need of *continually* looking unto Jesus came as a helpful reminder, and he had been helped again by the ministry of our aged Friend to-day. Then he knelt in prayer."²

On the next day, Isaac Sharp writes of various occupations, adding: "Called with Harold on Dr. Brown, the chronic cases specialist. He prescribed for me and I got the preparation made up INSTANTER. I asked as to his fee.

" 'Oh, nothing,' said he, 'nothing.' I thanked him and accepted his kindness."

Isaac Sharp was invited to meet the pastors of the different churches in San José, in their weekly meeting in that city, at the Y.M.C.A. Rooms, and believed that in this he should find right opening for service. "In the providence of our Heavenly Father," he began, "I find myself in these walls to-day. I say in the providence of God, for within many lands, and among many people, I have loved to quote in their hearing 'They who mark the hand of Providence shall never want a Providence to mark.' There are two things I desire to leave with you; the Perpetual Presence of the Lord Jesus, and the receptive faculty we have need to use. The widow's cruse and barrel failed not; the receptive power was there. As many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God. . . . The indwelling power of the Spirit of God was well understood by Paul, who spoke of the mystery hid from ages and generations, but now made manifest to the saints; which is *Christ in you, the hope of glory!* . . . The time passed rapidly. I asked for a short period of silence as in the presence of the Lord, and then knelt in prayer."

As we read of his asking for a little time of silence, we recall a few words in "Tom Brown's Schooldays": "One of those blessed short silences in which the resolves that colour a life are taken."

At the conclusion of the meeting most of the fourteen ministers who were present came forward to give their aged visitor a hand-grasp.

A few days later Isaac Sharp, after saying in his diary, that "Sivert" (his son-in-law) had pointed out to him a newspaper paragraph on disturbances in China, from military students showing opposition to British missionaries, he adds: "Should any of my friends at home see it, their solicitude will not be lessened in all probability. But in the face of all this, I am enabled to breathe with quiet confidence, 'None of these things move me.' The Lord is over all. He reigneth *King for ever.*"

A visit was now paid by Isaac Sharp, accompanied by his dear friend Joel Bean, to Oregon. "The travel," he writes, "was searchingly severe and culminated in an ascent up the mountains, 3,000 feet through the primeval forest in a wonderful solitude. We were present at the two Quarterly Meetings of Newberg and Salem, and at the different meetings composing them. . . . What the eventual outcome may be, we know not; but there is an ever-increasing tendency to the outward and visible, rather than to the inward and invisible reality of the perpetual Presence of Christ, His dominion in His Church, and silent communion with the Father and with the Son; the Holy Spirit being the witness the while to its reality. Nevertheless, as said Paul, 'Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.'" Again, he alludes to the "ascendancy of singing in meetings, brought in head and shoulders, and the lowering effect produced in the almost entire ignoring of silence."

After the mountainous ascent, to which reference has been made, the travellers met a little company in a meeting for worship, and were thankful to be present. The next day they held a meeting at Marion, and that night took the train for San José, spending two nights on the road. Joel Bean then brought his aged friend to his temporary home, with his "dear daughter and son-in-law." It was well that he had reached this resting place, for a dangerous illness was at hand.

CHAPTER XV.

“ Have Faith—where’er thy bark is driven,
The calm’s disport, the tempest’s mirth;
Know this—God rules the hosts of heaven
And the inhabitants of earth.”

Translation from Schiller.

“ My unassisted heart is barren clay,
That of its native self can nothing feed:
Of good and pious works THOU art the seed,
That quickens only where THOU say’st it may:
Unless THOU show to us Thine own true way,
No man can find it.”

Wordsworth.

TOO ill to write himself, on the 30th of May, 1892, Isaac Sharp dictated a letter to his namesake nephew. Whilst admitting that “a wave of depression” is over him, “like the trail of influenza, yet no way connected with it,” he comments on the blessings of the present and looks hopefully forward: “I rejoice to be here instead of in the wild places of the earth, and am glad to find myself so well situated for nursing and help, and medical aid. . . . Severe local suffering has brought me low. I am more than willing for a while to be so, as a preparation for another campaign. In severity and prostration this attack is like that of Paris, but I feel assured the end is not yet. The passage rises up before me with great assurance and sweetness as out of the depths, ‘I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord.’ I am expecting some

amelioration of the sufferings ere long ; meanwhile, the grace of endurance is mercifully granted me by night and by day."

On the 9th of June, his daughter writes : " My beloved father has had a very alarming attack of prostration. . . . He said, ' I am *supremely* happy through the loving-kindness of my Lord and Saviour. I am not afraid, and am resting upon Him. If it be His will that I should enter through the portal, I am ready. I have never felt so low. And yet I still look forward to recovery.' . . . My father seems very pleased at S.'s developing such excellent nursing capabilities and his strong arm can often give assistance. . . . The nurse continues to do exceedingly well." During this suffering illness the invalid was tried by a hot spell, the thermometer standing at about 98° in the shade, and one day at 104°. The doctor now sometimes looked very grave but endeavoured to keep up his patient's spirits as much as possible. Any little progress made one hour was perhaps lost by pain the next.

Meanwhile the word " China " was graven more and more deeply upon his heart, and so clearly did he see himself engaged in a labour of love to the missionaries there that, even when the doctors had no hope whatever of his recovery, he said he believed the Lord had further service for him. He would, indeed, often say, that he saw a " clear light shining in the direction of China ! " and it was a great cheer to receive an official letter from the committee at home—written, albeit, before they knew of his critical condition—giving him full encouragement to go to that far-off land.

On his eighty-sixth anniversary he was extremely weak and said he felt " like a ship stranded at dead low water." But, in reality, the worst was over then. A few days earlier Dr. Pierce took a very unfavourable view of the case, and fearing poisoning of the system had a consultation with another physician. To his patient he said :

" I have seen all along that you are not afraid of death. You are far from home. If you have anything to arrange,

documentary or otherwise, do it *to-day*. Do not delay. To-morrow you may be in delirium." "I love him for his honesty and kindness," remarked Isaac Sharp, at a later date.

"I felt conscious that the angel of death hovered over me, but was restrained from descending. Even at my lowest ebb, I did not feel that my work on earth was done, for while in the deeps the Lord was graciously pleased to reveal to me that the commission He had given me for China had never been cancelled, and that thither He would have me go."

His rapid recovery was a marvel to all who saw it. "Last Thursday," writes his daughter, "my father felt well enough to be dressed and to sit up a little with the doctor's permission. The nurse said, 'Patients never go out of the room the first time they are up.' 'Oh, yes,' he was going, not only into the parlour, but into the porch. He sat there a little, and did so enjoy the fresh air and the scent of the flowers. . . . I could not have believed that anyone so weak as he was, and at such an age, could have picked up as quickly as he has done."

Soon, as we might imagine, his own fingers hold the familiar pen, and he tells a nephew of his prospect of soon sailing for Japan, *en route* for China. He adds: "'You are a wonderful man,' said the doctor on his last visit. 'They tell me so,' I replied, 'and I *partly believe* it.' Again and again he has said, 'Your vitality is great at eighty-six.' And behold, he no longer stumbles at China, but quite expects me to go. . . . The Lord is as able to bring me back as to take me thither. I love to feel that the issues of life and of death are with Him."

He refers about this time to "a most welcome call from our dear friend Samuel Morris."

On the 18th of August he writes: "My dear daughter and I have greatly enjoyed a week at Pacific Grove. We managed to walk fully five miles one day." He thought it

right to propose that a religious meeting should be held on the Sunday spent at this place, and on the preceding day his mind was "closely exercised" in reference to it, although, he adds, "not without a solacing trust that 'the Lord will provide.'" His daughter had placed a notice of the meeting at the entrance of the boarding-house, and the proprietor was amongst the first to come.

Isaac Sharp writes: "After a time of silence, I addressed the little company at some length with decided freedom of utterance. This was followed by earnest vocal prayer. Then a little time of silence. Afterwards there were several expressions of satisfaction at having been present. Z. said: 'You have certainly been influenced by the Holy Spirit in what you have spoken to-day.'"

Isaac Sharp was much interested in Frank, a Japanese waiter at this boarding-house, who was earning what he could during the vacation of the university at which he was studying, intending to enter the field of mission service among his own people. On leaving, Isaac Sharp, who felt "an inward sympathy" with him, gave him a five dollar note in a folded paper, on which he had written the words, "The Lord loves to be near to them who love to be near to Him. 'The Lord will provide.'"

"We were just leaving the house," adds Isaac Sharp, "when he rushed out and placed a little piece of paper in my hand with his name and where he hailed from in Japan. He was in look more grave than the generality of his people, possibly from the daily tax on his physical ability. . . . Sivert and Elsie met us at the station, and on our arrival at Creek Orchard, Rover gave us a lively salute of recognition and was as pleased as any dog need be in giving a welcome home. . . . We called on Dr. Pierce yesterday. He had paid me about forty visits. He speaks cheerily of China, expressing his full expectation that I shall come back to California 'all right.' He looks on my restoration to health (not to say my recovery) as very remarkable. So it is, but the Lord hath done it.

"I remarked to the doctor, 'I hope to call on thee should I live to return from China.' 'Which,' rejoined the doctor, 'you surely will ; I have no doubt about it.' And so we shook hands and took leave very cordially."

To his daughter, he said : "I do not speak boastfully, but I hope and *expect* to see you all again."

Meanwhile, his committee in England wrote again, and the view they now naturally took was a further trial of faith to him.

We quote from their own report : "On hearing of his serious illness, his committee, having regard to the grave contingencies incident to the long river journey in China, thought it right to suggest, with the concurrence of the Meeting for Sufferings, the postponement of his visit to China. . . . But in making the suggestion they could, of course, do no more than place the subject very seriously before the mind of our dear friend, leaving him to act under his own sense of responsibility to his Lord and Master. It was to Isaac Sharp a time of solemn proving, but our dear friend felt . . . it was his duty to go forward to China."

In reference to this period of his life, his friend, Joel Bean, whose home was not far from Berryessa, writes : "There were peculiar circumstances and providences attending his later mission which rendered more impressive his witness and service for his Lord. He was bearing the weight of more than four-score years, and the physical strain of many a siege. Then we saw him stricken down and permitted to endure long weeks of suffering, with life trembling in the balance. We could not believe it was for himself alone. There was a lesson for us all in the example it was his to show, not only of submissive trust, but of heroic faith. As the vision continued with him of service yet to be accomplished, and necessity was laid upon him by a command renewed in the depths, he was raised up, and we saw him embark, without a companion, on a journey of seven thousand miles to the interior of China.

The courage of his friends at home, whose sympathy had not been wanting hitherto, had wavered. He was now entering on an adventure which they had not dared to encourage.

"We cannot forget the scene in the state-room of his cabin on the great steamer, to which some of us accompanied him, when our hearts committed him to the unslumbering Shepherd's care, and our spirits were given to feel the uplift and the strength by which he was sustained. Confidently, calmly, peacefully, joyfully, he went out upon the waves, signalling his farewell from the deck. It was by devotion like this that for many long years he served his generation and his God. I have travelled with him when few men in his bodily condition would venture to leave the comforts and rest of home. In Oregon, when most of the meetings had been visited and he was on the verge of a severe illness, in weariness and pain, he undertook a journey of twenty miles over a rough road rather than miss a little mountain meeting. The consecration of his remaining strength, the diligent pressing forward, deterred by no obstacles, in order to finish the work given him to do, were an inspiration to others to gird themselves anew for their appointed way and work.

"In Isaac Sharp's public ministry, abounding as it did in poetic phrases, the melody of which will linger in the memory of thousands who heard him, there was a remarkable freshness and fitness in his messages. In the meetings of Friends of different types in all sections of our country I had the opportunity to notice and admire the adaptation of his discourses to various conditions and to feel their impressive force. In our own meeting particularly was there from time to time the opening of a fresh spring and the utterance with tenderness and power of words suited to the deepest wants of our souls. Memorably on some occasions was this the case."

It was on the *Gaelic* that Isaac Sharp embarked on the 6th of September, 1892, for Japan, *en route* for China. An

appointed surgeon was on board, and our traveller and he soon became friends, not that much professional aid was needed, for he had a sea-breeze appetite and no trace of *mal-de-mer*. "The doctor appears to be a deep thinker," he writes, "he invited me into his well supplied laboratory, where we had a long and interesting *confab*. Amongst other things he told me of *salol* as a little-known remedy and a perfectly safe one, which he thought might be useful to me. . . . In view of the cholera having proved fatal at Chung King, I asked him at another time what was the best remedy in case of need. 'Salol,' he replied, 'nothing better for killing the germs. Half a teaspoonful to a teaspoonful for a dose. It is very powerful, but perfectly harmless.'"

The doctor had to tell his active patient that he had seen him moving about on deck too vigorously. "Remember you have only recently recovered from a very severe illness. Wait awhile, rest; it is rest you need."

Soon we have the record of a day in bed, followed by the words: "From past experience and present assurance most mercifully granted I believe that soon 'this too will pass.' Three missionaries came to my bedside to inquire for me. I was glad of this token of sympathetic regard."

He ventured to suggest to a fellow-voyager, a missionary in Japan, the plan for a daily meeting together of such as were so inclined for Bible-reading and comment, free from argument. He pleasantly responded and passed on the proposal, which found favour. "Surprise continues to be felt," he says, "at the physical strength falling to my lot; not a trace of sea-sickness and very ready for meal-time as it comes in course."

To a nephew he writes: "I doubt seeing Creek Orchard (the residence of his son-in-law) again before the buds of spring are ready to burst. If only in the Lord's own time, all will be well. I go as with my life in my hand, but not forgetting Joseph Sewell's silver tone: 'Thy life shall be given thee for a prey in all places

whither thou goest.' This has been singularly verified up to the present. We have a specially nice company of passengers ; two D.D.'s on board, but they are very accessible, and altogether I am getting along very agreeably and feeling by no means lonely." About a week later he announces his arrival at Japan "wonderfully well, a great joy and cause for devout thanksgiving."

A few days later, however, when he consulted Dr. Whitney about swelling of the legs he pronounced unhesitatingly that it arose from weak action of the heart, and said he should like to have a consultation with Dr. Macdonald. "This does not distress me," says the trustful patient, "though I cannot but regard it with some solemnity in prospect of sailing next week for Shanghai. Better die in China or on the way thither, or whilst returning from thence in the service of the King, at His blessed bidding, than die at home. I accept the words as they rise before me—while penning these lines of record—with peace and with praise, 'Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.'"

On the following day Dr. Macdonald called by appointment and after a careful examination said :

"Could you not go home instead of going to China? You have strength for this and could be under medical care if needful." When Isaac Sharp told him of the call of the Master to go to China, the doctor added :

"I give you my professional opinion ; this duty devolves on me, but I do not interfere between the Lord and you."

"Faith is once more on the trial," writes the patient, after confiding the story of this interview to his diary. "Meanwhile I ask the Lord for help, and strength, and clear vision. I say not for the renewal of faith, for of His great mercy, faith has never been permitted up to this present to fail."

To a nephew he writes a few days later : "Some of my friends are greatly exercised about the journey to Chung King ; exposure, difficulty and possible danger in the

rapids, with 400 miles to travel in a native boat (which a returning missionary described to me by saying, '*the boat is naked,*') have in their estimation a good deal of the shady side. In the loving-kindness of the Lord these things have no prohibitory fears for me. . . . I go forth in simple faith and trust, and with the sealed assurance that the Lord will graciously care for me for this life and the next."

Again he says when writing on the 29th of September: "On taking my ticket this morning not a single misgiving rose up to mar the sense of rest upon my spirit." He writes of his enjoyment in meeting with Samuel Morris, of Philadelphia, and Jonathan E. Rhoads, who were in Japan on religious service. On the day before his embarkation for Shanghai he says: "At the breakfast table Samuel Morris offered prayer, and made tender mention of that which lies before me. After breakfast, we conversed on Australia and various subjects. I spoke a few words lovingly to them and felt comforted." On the following day George Braithwaite accompanied him to the steamer *Sakio Maru*, and saw the nice cabin he would have. In the parting there was a "blending of joy and sorrow, joy being in the ascendant, with a sense of the unique, as bound for the Chinese waters at eighty-six, 'alone yet not alone.' Some of my dear friends may not fully comprehend my position, while others will, I am well assured, grasp it with faith, and rejoice that the Master, in wonderful love and mercy, condescends consciously to bear me up and enables me to rejoice in Him."

As usual, he soon found companionship, and in reference to a fellow-voyager he writes: "On deck and under the light of the moon we had a long and free conversation, in which I spoke plainly on his habit of smoking as endangering his own health, and being on the wrong side of those, younger than himself, who might be influenced by his example. . . . He asked on what authority I went forth on my mission. I was glad to say in effect, on the authority of Christ and at His bidding—the Annual Meeting

held in London giving its sanction, when, after solid deliberation, they had sought to know the mind of Christ. When we parted for the night he kindly said that he had been both interested and edified."

In reference to the captain he says: "We had some conversation, among other subjects on smoking. He owned to being a constant smoker. I told him I gave it up, and with it all intoxicants half-a-century ago. I told him the heart was affected by smoking.

"'Oh,' said he, 'I cannot lie on my left side for a minute.'"

The passage to Kobé was an excellent one. Isaac Sharp went on shore to call at the Seamen's Mission. As he was about to leave, Montague Beauchamp, a nephew of Lord Radstock, came in. Isaac Sharp introduced himself as a Friend. "My wife is a Friend" (Florence, *née* Barclay) was his reply; and when he found that Isaac Sharp was bound for Chung King, *via* Ichang, he added: "The Lord be praised! we shall travel together. I have secured the only remaining berths on deck." This companionship was very cheering to Isaac Sharp, and Mr. Beauchamp was able to give him valuable hints on travelling in China. "They are most kind," he writes, "and I feel it a happy circumstance and a privilege to be travelling with them. I read to them my two certificates, to which they listened with decided interest." At another time he read them two of his favourite poems, "Rhythm of St. Bernard" and "Coming," by B. M. It was a relief to him to learn from Mr. Beauchamp that the climate at Chung King is mild throughout the winter and that steamers can ply from Ichang to Shanghai all the winter through.

On the 11th of October he writes: "As we neared Shanghai, cotton mills and paper mills were a surprise, as was also the large extent of shipping of Chinese and other ports. The bar was successfully crossed after we had waited for the rise of the river in neap tides, and not long after the *Sakio Maru* was moored at the quay, whereon a

large crowd was waiting. Edward Evans from his Missionary Home and Agency came on board and took me with him. Tea at 6.30 was followed by family worship. While moored in still water about half-a-dozen of us had spent a brief period in my cabin. . . . Montague Beauchamp made some very helpful remarks and I felt it right to kneel in prayer that the Lord would graciously own and help each one of us according to our individual need, and bless His servants in the varied mission fields wherein was their service for Him."

On the following day he called on Montague Beauchamp at the China Inland Mission Home, where an opportunity was given him for addressing about forty missionaries and to offer heart-felt prayer on their behalf. A few days later he writes in his diary that he has been "greatly exercised in spirit from early morn—as it were in the valley of the shadow of death, yet fearing no evil, for, though greatly humbled, the Lord is over all the cypress shade with the assurance that my little work is not yet done."

Isaac Mason, of the Friends' Foreign Mission Association, who had just arrived from England, was to be his companion on the long journey to the Interior.

On the 19th of October Isaac Sharp says in a letter to a nephew : "Isaac Mason and I were to have sailed last night, but there was a hitch in the Customs. We look to proceed this week, possibly to-night, and to commence our voyage on the Yangtse from Shanghai to Hankow, where I hope to see that dedicated servant of the Lord Jesus, Dr. Griffith John. For years I have felt a strong and loving sympathy for and with him. Outwardly we are personally unknown to each other. I suppose my friends in England are far more thoughtful and possibly far more anxious as to the result of the journey—so to speak, for life or death—than I can be. Lo ! it is well. I have had my deep ponderings as it is meet, and some of them very deep, but no ponderings of doubt ; from these I am mercifully free. I meet with many missionaries and love to grasp them by the



M O N G O L I A

SHINGKING

PEH CHU LI

SHANTUNG

HWANG HAI
OR
YELLOW SEA

H O N A N
Peh-ling Mountains

K I A N G
N G A N
H E I

C H I
H U P E H
I-chang
Yangtze River

Shanghai *

Chusan Archipelago

CHUNG KING

CHE-KIANG

KWEL CHAU
H U N A N

K I A N G
S I

F U H K I E N

FORMOSA
OR
TAIWAN

KWANG TUNG
Canton

Hong kong

Tong king
Gulf

C H I N A

S E A

HAI-NAN

† Left Shanghai, 20/x/1892.
Reached Shanghai on return, 14/ii/1892.
† Left I-chang, 4/xi/1892.
† Reached Chung King, 5/xii/1892.
Left Chung King, 3/ii/1893.

Longitude East, 115° of Greenwich

120

hand. At the China Inland Mission I had an opportunity for saying a few loving words to about forty ; and by invitation went again next day to tell them of what I had seen of the work of the Lord in many lands. I spoke for an hour and a half. I was not weary and the audience listened very attentively. My message of love to the evening congregation at the Mission Hall was warmly acknowledged by several who grasped me by the hand, not without a desire for a blessing on the messenger. . . . *I cannot tell* of loneliness, but am nevertheless sensible of being alone. With the strength which the Lord giveth came the assurance yesterday, Fear not, *I am with thee* ; so in this strength I go forward."

On the 24th he writes again, from the steamer *Tai Wo*, Hankow : . . . " We arrived here yesterday and within three hours I was addressing an English speaking congregation, Dr. Griffith John having courteously placed me on the same platform as himself. I probably spoke more briefly than was expected, but I gave them what the Lord gave me in much love. Arnold Foster, of the London Missionary Society, met us on board and has been most kind and cordial.

" So we are now 600 miles on our way, and with 500 more before us to Ichang, and then the *River and the Rapids* 400 more, occupying from four to five weeks. I have much joy of heart in being able to say to myself in the inward depth, ' The will of the Lord be done.'

" My friends smile when I tell them, ' Joseph gave commandment concerning his bones,' but I have none to give. I expect to take them with me to California ! " . . .

" 25th. To-day we shift our quarters to the steamer for Ichang. It is like going from one house to another. It may seem a simple thing, but there is a sort of rending with it, however ideal the rending may be. We are having *glorious* weather. (' There is one glory of the *sun*,' etc.) I was glad of an umbrella sunshade yesterday and a

pair of dark spectacles to ward off the glare. Then again the crescent moon was no less lovely.

"Surely it is well to get hold of every bit of anything that has a *lawful* glow upon it.

"Arnold Foster met us with a kindly greeting from the landing stage before we fully got to the mooring stage. We went yesterday to the Chinese Hospital, and, behold, in the door-keeper's cabin there was hanging up a good photo of John Bright ! Old age is regarded by the Chinese with respect and admiration, so I come in for a fair share. There was an amusing incident at the hospital. A group of four or five were near me. They shave their heads, and are consequently bald. I lifted my 'wide-awake' to let them see I was bald as they. They smirked, and smiled, and laughed, and appeared to enjoy it."

Before reaching Hankow, Isaac Sharp had said in his diary in reference to Dr. Griffith John : " Few missionaries whom I have never seen have been so much on my mind and heart, in loving sympathy ; sympathy with him too in the tenderest severance of life some years ago." After becoming acquainted with him he writes : " Dr. John is in the thirty-eighth year of his mission life in China. Thirty-five years ago Hankow could not be visited without great risk. I told him my friends in England could not understand my venturing hither after illness so recent and severe, but that it had pleased the Lord to give the command *go* with great inward clearness. . . . In our interchange of thought, I felt closely united to him in spirit, and was comforted." Isaac Sharp was glad, too, to become acquainted with Dr. John's daughter and her husband. The latter was born at Brighton, and Isaac Sharp adds : " Think of two Brightonians meeting and greeting with a double squeeze of the hand at Hankow, in far-off China, and of the *inspiring* mental vision of beach, the Steyne, and last, not least, those Sussex Downs, their velvet tread and delicious air.

"Thence to seek the spot where Henrietta Green laboured among the lowly, not shrinking from menial offices so that she might aid not a few who needed it. Though not successful in the search, from recent alterations, I am glad to have made it, as it gave a more vivid picture of the scene of her labours than I could otherwise have had. Arnold Foster told me of her faithfulness in speaking to two persons separately, in reproof, but in so gentle and loving a spirit as to give no offence."

At Ichang the travellers were met by Frederick S. Deane, who had come from the Friends' Mission at Chung King to meet them. His junk had shot down through the rapids in about five and a half days. In the autumn there are fewer wrecks than in some other parts of the year.

The following brief extract from the journal is quoted as illustrative of the manner in which in daily life Isaac Sharp sought, under divine guidance, to use his influence as a talent to be traded with for the Master: "I called on John Nightingale, of the Customs, and enjoyed half-an-hour or more with him. He called in a friend of his, a Swede, to share in the conversation. Before parting I asked for a brief silence together, and then knelt in prayer."

Once, in one of the busiest of London streets, Isaac Sharp met a bank manager, who addressed him with some passing remark. With the bright smile on his face which seemed always to invite love and friendship, he replied: "Thou hast thy work to do, and I have mine." Then, pointing upward, he added ere hurrying on: "Meet me above; meet me above."

Before Isaac Sharp left Ichang, Captain Arnott, master of the S.S. *Chang Wo*, told him that if he left Chung King in the beginning of January for his return journey, he would arrive at Ichang again in time for the *Chang Wo*.

The Friends now pursued their course up the Yangtse Kiang river. As the junk—specially engaged for the journey—slackened speed to take in some passengers, the

not unfrequent salute of "foreign devils" was heard from the junks that passed by.

Of the ascent of the rapids Isaac Sharp says : " There is some excitement in passing the rapids, for if the rope breaks the vessels drifts away, and may easily go on the rocks. Moreover the trackers, or men on shore who haul the vessel along, have to respond promptly to the beat of the signal drum, and the waving of the pilot's arms, and the shouting of his voice. A rope may get entangled on a projecting rock out of the sight of the trackers, and the drum will warn them to stop till the rope is again set free. The ship's sail is hoisted when there is wind for it. So there is the wind, the trackers, and the rowers on board to aid our progress, and yet with the strong current and the tortuous course of the Yangtse Kiang river, two miles an hour is considered fair progress."

The last four hundred miles of this voyage occupied a month, and after describing it Isaac Sharp adds : " Incredulity is ready to whisper, ' And this at eighty-six ! ' What matter ? I go with my life in my hand not for the first time ; the Lord Jesus I have faith to believe will care for me whatever the issue."

In reference to one of the rapids he says : " As we passed through, towed by a threefold bamboo rope, in less than three quarters of an hour we had got through the surging and were again in the still flow of the quiet but rapid river. It is not unusual for passengers to leave the junk for the river bank and walk, if able to, till the danger is over. In the midst of the surging I remembered the promise of the Lord that He would take care of me, and my heart was stilled as in His presence."

To a nephew he writes on Sunday, the 13th of November, 1892 : " The labours of the rowers and trackers are ended, and the men are enjoying their ease at eventide. In the gloaming, red candles were burnt and incense sticks, and at one end of the boat, paper money was burnt before an idol ; nor is the ceremony considered complete without

one of the company kneeling and bowing his forehead to the ground or deck, while another with closed hands raises them up and down three times. Would that the worship of the only true God had possession of the hearts of the myriads of this vast empire in which is found very much both strange and new. Temples and shrines abound, and there seems to be no lack of priests.

"We are sitting in our living room at one table. Size of room, eleven feet by nine. Then my bed-room, nine by seven, all to myself. Then another room, nine by seven, for the joint occupancy of Isaac Mason and Frederick S. Deane. The kitchen comes next, with outside space at either end; enough in the forepart to accommodate between forty and fifty men, for whom rice is being constantly prepared, which they partake of freely out of basins with the Chinese chop-sticks. I had no expectation whatever of so excellent accommodation for the journey. . . . I am ready to sigh over what I have written for the absence of a true portrayal of the wonderful scenes through which we are passing.

"We entered this morning one of the gorges, some forty miles long, and I contemplate a further feast of the indescribably magnificent. I think of 'Auld Willy' as I write, who used to sum up at the end of his vocabulary with one single word, '*Tre-mèn-du-ous*!!' But all this is not without a deeply chastened sense of responsibility. '*Shrinking from it at last*,' dost thou say? Nay, verily, not for a moment. 'The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof,' and small is the portion over which He condescends to bid me go, though seven thousand miles be traversed from San Francisco to Chung King. . . . And now, as to this wonderful voyage, the like of which I never witnessed. *A month of mountains*, striking in their variety, and imposingly grand. I never tire of gazing at their endless variety. Villages here and there, grotesque in their general aspect and surroundings, and scattered dwellings, intense in their isolation."

The following day he writes in his journal : "Only by cleaving to the Lord can I find a satisfying portion, with renewed ability to wrestle ; nevertheless the lamp of Life is burning, and the Light of the Lord is the Light of Life. Blessed be His name for ever."

Three days later he adds : "I am glad and thankful to be less pressed in spirit. I dare believe that the Lord has a purpose in this journey, which, sooner or later in its revealing may bear fruit to His praise. Once more I commit this burden of love and its sore travail to the Lord Jesus, in whose name and power I ventured forth. . . . The tribute of thanksgiving arises in my heart afresh for the sustaining power of mercy, love, and grace."

"Isaac Mason is busy with F. S. Deane in his Chinese lesson. I love to think of these young men and the possible future of their lives, whether near or remote ; and it is a joy to me that the Society of Friends has a place in the foreign mission fields of service as never before, residually—in Madagascar, Syria, India, Mexico, Bulgaria, Turkey, Jamaica, Africa, Alaska, and China."

Again and again there are allusions in the diary—touching under the circumstances—to a more or less suffering state of health.

Before he left Shanghai he had received a telegram from the Friends' Mission at Chung King, asking if he would like to have the companionship of a doctor or of the senior missionary, but had sent the reply : "Deane, without Davidson or doctor, ample."

Sometimes the weather was cold and misty, but with his wonted cheerfulness he writes of how "wonderfully the air was tempered by a charcoal fire in a flower-pot jar," and of how he found the warmth soothing and comfortable while taking care to let in enough fresh air.

At length Chung King is reached, and on the 7th of December, 1892, he remarks in a letter : "I scarcely think *anything, now that I am here*, would disturb the tranquil enjoyment of a sealed assurance of being at Chung King in the ordering of the Lord. . . .

"Chung King is an ancient city of some quarter of a million inhabitants, with an ascent from the river of one hundred and fifty feet, chiefly by ill-conditioned stone steps, up which I was borne, as usual, in a covered chair with two bamboo poles—men front and behind—but how they climb up those steps is a marvel. Ancestor worship is a great bar in the way of the acceptance of Christianity. Nevertheless, however slowly, light is spreading. There is a wonderful variety of complexion and features; some of the Chinese are as light as Europeans, and others as sallow as if they had been bathed in the *Yellow Sea* and retained from thence a sort of permanent transmitted dye. Nor are all the eyes equally angular.

"Conservative to a degree, they do not like the foreign invasion, and would get rid of Europeans if they could. There are honourable exceptions among the native Christians, but the chariot wheels of progress move slowly on. Christian schools are among the elements of uplifting, but it is a hard fight."

The missionaries of all the four missions received Isaac Sharp with wonderful openness, and gave him *carte blanche* for religious service in their congregations. It was a joy to him that at one meeting, with only three exceptions, the whole missionary staff of the city were present—Church, Methodist Episcopal, China Inland Mission, London Missionary Society, and Friends. At some of the meetings Robert J. Davidson "ably and feelingly" interpreted for him, and his wife, as well as himself, spared no pains to make the visit "all embracing in its completeness."

Reference is made to "little four-year-old Robin, who brings out his Chinese more fluently than his English, but is no way short of either on a pinch."

Isaac Sharp greatly appreciated the *spontaneous* offerings of some Chinese Christians from four different mission stations, deputations coming with choice presents: Scrolls on which gold designs were printed on silk or satin, a fur wrapper for the river journey, three idols formerly

in use for scores of years, a banner, six feet long, which was carried through the streets. An inscription on one of the scrolls contains the words, "Your cheerful spirit and smart robust health are an evident token of Heaven's favour."

Although there was no frost at Chung King, the dampness increased the rheumatism in the knees, from which Isaac Sharp suffered, but his general health was good, and he writes of being "happy, *very*. Kindness all round to my admiration. Surely the Lord has gone before." Of his rheumatism he said little, but much sympathized with a resident missionary's neuralgia. It was said that what he accomplished was "stupendous" for a man of his years.

One lady writes : "The thought of his love in coming all this way at his age seemed to be the means of strengthening all the missionaries with whom he came in contact."

"I think," writes another, "he has been the means of drawing all nearer to one another and nearer to the Saviour. I have been struck with his great gentleness and unselfishness."

Miss Ramsay, of the China Inland Mission, remarked (to a friend of the writer) that no one who saw or heard the dear old man would ever forget the sense of heavenliness that seemed to pervade him.

The Church Missionaries and the American Methodist Episcopal Mission were equally delighted with him, and his ministry to them seems to have made a deep impression.

The natives were charmed with him, and in their great veneration for length of life were delighted to see a really old man from England.

The missionaries of the Friends' Foreign Mission had always worked in fellowship and harmony with those of other denominations, but we learn that this "precious unity was greatly strengthened and cemented by Isaac Sharp's labours amongst them all."

From his bed of acute suffering in California he had, with a trembling hand, written to Chung King, saying that, notwithstanding his very critical condition, which necessi-

tated the care of two nurses, he still looked forward to being at Shanghai in October on his way to Chung King.

"Such a prospect as this," writes Robert Davidson, "seemed to us incredible!"

One missionary who called on him said: "Mr. Sharp, the Lord has sent you to us just at this time when we are in need"; whilst the superintendent of another mission said: "We feel as if you had come to see *us*, and are one of ourselves."

"I indeed felt," adds Robert J. Davidson, "that if Isaac Sharp had a call to any portion of his long journey he had it for China; and though we have only, as yet, had him here for a few days, the blessing we have already received has not been small."

At a later date, he adds: "It would be quite impossible to express how much his visit has been appreciated by every one, but I *can* say it is far beyond our own expectations. . . . Recounting the circumstances which led him to come, and the many things that seemed against his undertaking such a task, we could not but feel that there was more than the ordering of man in it, which brought him so far with a message of love, so that we could only accept his deep sympathy and words of counsel and help as a message direct from our Heavenly Father."

In a letter to a nephew, Isaac Sharp says: "Deep exercise of soul was my portion on my way thither, albeit with no shade of doubt. It was probably a gracious preparation for the service which has so wonderfully fallen to my lot in this vast city. A ship, *however old*, needs ballast for safe sailing! I write on the borderland of the old year, and prospectively,

‘Ring out the old,
Ring in the new.’

Memorable are the mercies of the past. . . . The burden of China in general, and of Chung King in particular, so long on my spirit, has been owned thus far in its fulfilment abundantly."

CHAPTER XVI.

“ Joy is the light that shines furthest out at sea.”

Writer unknown.

“ We took what care we could, and God, the Lord, did the rest, or rather, He did all, for His wisdom guided us. Oh, the bliss of living, as seeing ‘ Him who is invisible ! ’ The Finger of God is as visible still, to those who have eyes to see, as when the fire-cloud pillar led His people through the wilderness.”

Dr. John G. Paton.

IT was in the centre of China that New Year's Day, 1893, was spent by Isaac Sharp. He tells a nephew, his most regular correspondent, that his “ month at Chung King had exceeded by far his most sanguine expectations. . . . The ignorance and superstition are very painful and pitiful. Yet from out of all this there are raised up, as a sort of first fruits, one here and another there to the praise of the Lord. Missionaries in China labour under great discouragements, and are comforted with a word of love and sympathy and cheer.”

Some of his visits at the homes of missionaries of different denominations were little religious meetings in the family circle, known in the Society of Friends as “ Family visits.” His warm Christian sympathy and loving words, on “ filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ,” met a ready entrance in a household where the father had lately been very ill, and the only child, a baby boy, had been taken to a heavenly home. “ *We shall never forget it !* ” were the words which fell on his ear at parting.

One day, when on his way to the dispensary, he passed an evangelist who was preaching in the chapel, though only a few people were gathered around him. When Isaac Sharp was asked if he would like to address the people, he did not think it right to refuse. Robert Davidson acted as his interpreter. As soon as a foreign voice was heard by the passers by they quickly entered the building, so that in a very short time about one hundred were present.

"I spoke," he says, "with love in my heart, which found an outlet in the living voice. I do not remember what I said except that a reminder was given them of one of their proverbs,

‘ Man looks outwardly,
God looks within.’

"R. J. Davidson told me afterwards that what had been spoken was suitable and appropriate to the Chinese mind, whereof I was glad, and went on my way with a thankful heart. . . ."

In an address to missionaries, Isaac Sharp remarked : "It is good, and greatly helpful also, to cherish an abiding sense of the *perpetual presence* of the Lord Jesus by His Spirit." These words are characteristic of him, and one likes to blend them with memories of his love of humour and merriment, a natural unbending which must have been very good for him in the arduous strain of service, whilst it also gave much pleasure to others.

Leonard Wigham, of the Friends' Foreign Mission Association, writes, 6th November, 1897 : "I think it was Dr. Griffith John who said, 'He is the youngest man among us !' He was generally the liveliest person at table, and it was delightful to see him, after setting us off laughing, with assumed modesty cover his face with his hands. We were most of us quite young in the Friends' Mission, but he would enter very sympathetically into our feelings, interests and recreations. . . . The results of his visit it is impossible to tabulate or indicate to the outward observation, but, from the results on our own hearts, I feel sure

that he gave very great impetus to the mission work wherever he went. His personality, his strong faith, his cheerful temperament, his love and his sympathy, have had a strong and a lasting influence for good upon those whom he visited.

"His health was so frail that the journey from San Francisco involved great risk to his life, but he had a clear sense that he was obeying the Divine Will, and he was able to impart his cheery confidence to others.

"The Chinese, with their traditional reverence for old age, were much interested in the prospect of his coming, and while he was among them their admiration of him knew no bounds. They felt that his love in coming such a distance was marvellous. Even now, many of them cherish a very affectionate remembrance of 'Pastor Sha' and his visit. I think he helped the missionaries very much by his exemplification of the love and self-sacrifice to which true Christianity leads men."

Again and again in Isaac Sharp's journal of this period we come across touching little allusions to lack of health, such as: "A disturbed night. . . . Thankful nevertheless for less rheumatic stiffness and for more ability to walk"; or:

"Dr. Davenport gave me a prescription. He found a valvular disturbance in the heart; recommended horizontal rest as essential, and the avoidance of the up and down Chung King thoroughfares. . . . It came before me to remind Dr. Davenport that when our Lord sent forth His disciples on their mission, His first words were, '*Heal the sick.*' He cared for the bodies as well as for the souls of men. On this wise a blessing is in it to this day."

In one of his addresses at the China Inland Mission Isaac Sharp remarked: "Dr. Griffith John said not long ago, 'Oh, that I was beginning my mission life rather than nearing the end. There is so much to do and so little accomplished.' My heart is largely in sympathy with those who are *beginning* their mission service." In his farewell address at Chung King, we find the following significant words: "The power

of evil is great, the power of Satan is great. When deeply sensible of it, it is surely well to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, 'ALL power is given unto ME in heaven and in earth,' and to cherish the settled conviction, 'The Lamb and His followers *shall have the victory.*'

"Unable to do any good thing save by the help of the Lord, and keeping this steadily in remembrance, in a large measure, *a man's life is what he makes it.* When discouragements come in, flee to the Master."

Leonard Wigham was his "choice companion." On his first night on board the junk engaged for the return river voyage of 582 miles to Ichang, *en route* for Shanghai, Isaac Sharp writes: "Retired to rest before 10 p.m. A most comfortable bed had been made up for me, leaving me with a deep impress of all the love and kindness Robert and Mary J. Davidson have shown me from first to last."

The voyage down the river was a trying one for Isaac Sharp, as strong head-winds made the progress slow, and he was oppressed with a bronchial cold and severe spasmodic cough, while not without "reminders" of more critical ailments. "To these," he writes, "I am keenly alive and feel thankful for their being kept under, and I am quite hopeful that, with a *blessing on the means*, they will be so, even as hitherto of recent date. The boat was on the move about 7 a.m. The wind, which is still high, made it difficult to row, and the boat was whirled round two or three times. The report of the wreck of a passenger boat near at hand was an evidence of the proximity of danger. The surging and tumult of the billows was impressively manifest. Unable as I lay even to look out of the window, a calm and a stillness came over my spirit as the Heaven-sent words came before me with a refreshing impress, 'When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee,' and the promise was abundantly fulfilled. It was but as a step from trial to triumph, and any trace of fear gave place to peaceful rest."

One evening when the men and their captain came for their Chinese hymn, Scripture reading and prayer, Isaac Sharp told them, that although he did not know their language, evening by evening his heart had gone up in prayer for a blessing on them from the Lord. He spoke of the duty of prayer, and mentioned the old African woman who was delighted to learn from a missionary, that God knew her language and that she might herself pray to Him !

On January the 19th he writes : " More snow on the mountains. The cough was on the verge of intensity for straining. I did not rise till near mid-day. Our faithful Lal-e, our general helper, came in and began to arrange for a tossing by removing water jugs on the floor and gathering up sundry medicine bottles into one place. We were now fast approaching the Ching-tan Rapid. It was judged best for about half-a-dozen of our company to land and walk along the shore. I was in bed ; it was well, for the like exposure might have brought on a very serious relapse. As I lay, the surging of the water was very suggestive. Its swell and tumult I could not see but its effect was very manifest. The bow of the junk was more than once under the water, the vehemence of which rapidly increased. The junk rose and fell by the violence of the water. I shut my eyes to lessen the giddiness which came over me. I was sensible of a tremor passing through me, stern in its reality, but very brief. A blessed assurance came to the rescue. The environment of the love of God was around me with a calm and quiet rest in a sealed assurance that, through the love of God and the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, at that moment all was well. The rapid was one of the longest and strongest, but in about an hour we were once more moving along in comparatively smooth water. Our cook and helper, native Christians, volunteered the expression that gratitude was due to God for a safe passage."

When asked by a missionary if any accident had occurred on the rapids, he replied : " No. I could not walk as the others, so I lay on my back looking up in two senses,

the water coming over and running down the boat. I was not afraid, oh no, but it was a time for serious thought. I knew God would take care of me, but not whether it would be in this world or the next. I was glad to get to land."

On the 20th of January, the day of arrival at Ichang, he was unequal to going ashore with his young companion, and after saying it was "humiliating to show the white feather," he adds: "I am forcibly reminded of the experience of Paul, 'Lest I should be exalted above measure there was given me a thorn in the flesh.'" Presently he was refreshed by a kind call from a missionary, and felt less oppressed. "Before retiring to rest, I finished Dr. A. T. Pierson's wonderful volume on 'The Divine Enterprise of Missions' (Hodder and Stoughton).

Dr. Perie, of the London Missionary Society, gave Isaac Sharp and his companion a cordial invitation to stay at his house whilst waiting for the steamer. The kindness shown him in this pleasant home was very timely, and he much appreciated the fire in the chamber grate and other thoughtful care for his health, which in a week's time had much improved. "I am graciously cared for on every hand," he writes, "in full accord with the promise of the Lord. Great is His faithfulness Who is over all." By the time the *Chang Wo* was ready to start he was well enough to undertake the remainder of the voyage to the coast. Leonard Wigham offered to go on to Shanghai, or even to accompany him to Japan, *en route* for California, a generous proposal which he did not think it needful to accept.

In a letter of recent date the former writes: "I had the pleasure of accompanying Isaac Sharp during the boat journey from Chung King to Ichang after his visit to us was ended. We were for thirteen days on a draughty native boat in the depth of winter. Isaac Sharp had a bad cold, which kept getting worse, but his cheerful spirits never left him. He was full of interesting accounts of his adventures, and of people he had met, and many a little pleasantry enlivened the tedium of the journey. He had

been unable to visit some missionaries in an isolated station, Wan Hsien, on his way up river, and soon after we started on the downward journey, he let me know that he intended to visit them as we passed, and visit them he did to their great gratification. Dr. Perie, who took charge of him at Ichang, and was very kind and attentive, told us he was greatly struck with the way in which Isaac Sharp understood his own case and knew exactly the meaning of all his symptoms. He was not quite so obedient as he should have been, and sometimes appeared to meet visitors when the doctor's orders were to stay in bed, but no doctor could stand long against his cheerful, smiling defence of himself. I saw him comfortably ensconced on a river steamer, and then left him with the hope that we might meet again some day."

Isaac Sharp's first night on board the *Chang Ho* was a cold one, and there was an obscuring snow storm, whilst the steam pipes failed to give out heat, but by aid of the "Hutton" hot water bottle, which was associated with "tender and touching" thoughts, he kept himself comfortably warm. The break in the voyage by another visit to Hankow was a welcome one. It afforded an opportunity for religious service there, and gave him the great pleasure of renewed intercourse with Dr. Griffith John and Mr. Arnold Foster. At length the time for the sailing of the steamship *Tatung* arrived. The night was dark, but Dr. Griffith John and others came on board to take leave, whilst Mr. Foster rendered much valued aid by caring for the luggage and seeing it all on board. The latter kindly furnishes the following reminiscences of the visits to Hankow :

"Ealing, 1st November, 1897.

"Mr. Isaac Sharp arrived in Hankow on the 23rd October, 1892, with Mr. Mason, a young missionary just going to join the Chung King Mission of the Friends' Foreign Mission Association. It was Sunday afternoon, and I well remember meeting them on board the river steamer that had

brought them from Shanghai. I was struck by the thoughtful and considerate attention with which Mr. Sharp was being treated by his companion. That evening, Mr. Sharp gave an address to the English congregation worshipping at The Rest—a hall belonging to the London Mission—where services are held every Sunday. The following day, both he and Mr. Mason accompanied me to one of our Chinese chapels in a street of the native town, where I was to address the ordinary assembly of passers by, who day after day fill our mission halls. We went the greater part of the way by boat and landed at a crowded jetty on the bank of the river Han—from which Hankow (*i.e.* Han-mouth) takes its name. As we stepped ashore I was pleased to see how two or three Chinamen standing by, at once came forward to help Mr. Sharp out of the boat. The Chinese, as is well-known, show great respect to old age, and these men noticing the venerable appearance of this stranger about to alight on the landing stage, only showed the characteristic politeness of their nation in offering him what assistance they could in leaving his boat. I think he was gratified by this little act of attention on their part. In the chapel as he sat and listened to the preaching, not a few of the congregation kept looking at him, and when I ceased speaking I was asked by one and another how old my friend was. During that and the few following days I saw a good deal of him. He was not very well at the time, and as he had a good deal of writing to do, he said he would prefer to spend most of his time quietly on board the steamer till he could proceed on his journey up river, rather than come and stay at my house as I should have liked him to do. Whenever I met him he was always very bright and showed great interest in our mission work, and like all the other members of our missionary community who met him, I felt much drawn to him. He left us after a very few days for Ichang, *en route* for Chung King, and we did not see him again for three months, when he passed through Hankow on his return journey.

"We had all thought it a very perilous undertaking for any one at his age to go this long distance, and especially during the winter months. The passage by native boat from Ichang to Chung King is sufficiently dangerous and sufficiently trying at any time, even to people who are young and strong. In winter, when the winds in the gorges of the upper Yangtse are cold and piercing, and sometimes accompanied with frost and snow, the discomforts of the journey are doubled. But Mr. Sharp had a strong conviction that God had called him to render this service to the missionary cause in Chung King, and no human counsel, even if it had been offered to him, would have deterred him from attempting the journey. The memory of his visit to Chung King is still treasured by the missionaries of all Societies who made his acquaintance at that time. He returned to Hankow on the 30th January, 1893, when he remained for some days as the guest of Mr. John Archibald, of the National Bible Society of Scotland. He spoke more than once at our meetings on this occasion. On the Sunday he addressed the Chinese Christians in the church of the London Missionary Society, by the invitation of Dr. Griffith John, who acted as his interpreter. On another day he spoke to an English congregation of some of his experiences in other lands, and of the missionary work he had seen there.

"But, greater than any pleasure to be got from listening to his public addresses, interesting though these were, was the pleasure of private conversation with him. He was a man who lived with God, and one to whom had been given in very large measure the blessing promised by our Lord to the pure in heart—'they shall see God.' I shall never forget some conversations that I had with him in my study, as with the utmost naturalness, and apparently all unconscious of what he was doing, he seemed to disclose the secret of his inner life with its motives and aims and aspirations, and its experiences of answered prayer. I never met any one who more impressed me with the

simplicity and childlikeness of his faith and confidence in God as his Father and ever-present Counsellor and Guide.

"His talk was absolutely free from all conventional religiousness. He could not talk for effect, but would only utter naturally and spontaneously what was real to himself. He was of a very joyous disposition, and even in talking most seriously, an element of quiet humour often made its appearance. I remember one day we were talking of the rapids over which he had travelled, once on his way up to Chung King, and again on his way down the river. These rapids are the special dread of all travellers to Western China, and every year scores, if not hundreds, of native craft are wrecked, either in ascending or in descending them. At such times the passengers are apt to lose all their goods, and sometimes even their lives.

" 'Were you not very much afraid when you came to them ? ' I asked.

" 'No,' he replied, 'not afraid. Certainly they called for serious thought, but I knew that my Father had promised to take care of me, though,' he added, 'whether He would do so by bringing me through them here, or by taking me through them to Himself, He had not revealed to me !'

"There was a merry twinkle in the old man's eye as he finished his sentence, and I smiled too, but his words have often recurred to me since then as expressive of the highest faith. How often our faith seems as if it would limit God's liberty of action in dealing with us to one course, viz., that which accords most with our view of what is best. The highest faith is that which trusts God absolutely, and is simply content with whatever He orders. '*Calling for serious thought*' has ever since then been a household word with us when speaking of dangers which a poorer faith than Isaac Sharp's would treat as justifying fear and misgiving.

"It must not be supposed, however, that Mr. Sharp's talk was all in the tone of religious seriousness. He was

at times very merry, and would tell anecdotes in which the joke turned against himself. He could never say anything that had in it the least tinge of unkindness or of irreverence. He more than once referred to, or quoted from, the great hymn of Bernard of Cluny, translated by Dr. Neale. I think he said he always carried about a copy of it with him. It was evidently his favourite hymn. He left us on the 9th of February, and I never met him again. Notwithstanding his great age, I always entertained the hope that we should meet whenever I returned to England, and it was with a feeling of real sorrow that I heard in Shanghai last April, just as I was on the eve of sailing for home, that a few weeks before, he had been called to his eternal rest. Certainly I shall always cherish with great thankfulness the memory of our brief acquaintance.

"It is lives such as his—so transparently sincere, so deeply reverent, so absolutely single-minded, so resolutely self-forgetful, so loyal to conviction—that do more than volumes of argument to prove the truth of things that we believe. To such men the unseen is infinitely more real than the seen, and the eternal infinitely more real than the things of time. Hence they are what they are, but they are this, not because of something peculiar to themselves, but simply in virtue of their personal union with the risen Lord as branches abiding in the True Vine."

Arrived at Shanghai it was not easy for Isaac Sharp to embrace all the openings, social and religious, which lay before him, and on the night before he left that city a farewell meeting was held at Mr. Evans's Mission House, at which more than a hundred missionaries and mission friends were present. In a letter he remarks : "*Quite enough* was said concerning my visit to China. . . . There was something well nigh on the border of overwhelming and yet so genuine, there was no room to question or gainsay. I could not but accept it as of the loving-kindness of the Lord . . . and inwardly praised Him. Full opportunity was afforded me to address those assembled on the guidance of

the Holy Spirit and on the blessing of living so near to the Lord Jesus as to be ever within sound of His voice."

Later in the evening Isaac Sharp gave an account of some of his mission journeyings, speaking with considerable energy and volume of voice for about an hour.

"Surely," said Mr. Steven, the missionary who sat next him, "there must be some mistake as to your age!" "I cannot remember the day of my birth," was the reply, "but I am credibly informed that it took place in the year 1806." Mr. Steven had recently arrived from England. "He spoke," says Isaac Sharp, "of Essex and of Joseph Smith. It was like music to hear of the home land."

"I am sensible," he writes, "of having passed through no small amount of strain and equally conscious of the help graciously vouchsafed, to the full realisation of the assurance, 'As thy days so shall thy strength be.' Again and again there has been a deep sense of inward thanksgiving for the gracious watchword given me before I entered on this present pilgrimage :

'Look unto *Me*
And *thou* shalt see.' "

"It has been very remarkable to witness the many *unsought* but gladly-accepted openings for service in this great city. My four months in China have been four months of blessing. I would rather encounter all the strength-testing over again than lose the joy of heart granted in unmerited love and mercy in the retrospect."

With the Psalmist, Isaac Sharp could emphatically say : "All my springs are in Thee." On a Saturday at Shanghai he wrote : "Very thoughtful concerning the probable engagements of the morrow with a sense of being brought low under pressure of spirit and emptiness."

It was on the 4th of February, 1893, that he left China. Two Wesleyan ministers were his agreeable fellow-voyagers. He writes : "Wm. A. Cornaby asked me to put down the countries I had visited. Such a thought had

never occurred to me. The Islands of Scilly, Shetland, Orkney, Faroe and Lindisfarne ; Norway, seven times ; Sweden, Denmark ; Iceland, twice ; Greenland, Labrador, France, Germany ; Basuto Land, the Orange Free State, the Transvaal and other parts of Africa ; Madagascar, Mauritius, Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand, Mexico, Canada, the Indian Territory and half the other States of the Union ; Austria, Bulgaria, Turkey, India, Japan and China."

But it was to God he would fain give the glory of all that was accomplished. The following lines of his are very characteristic :

Although our cup HE filleth to the brim,
 Save for the Lord's anointing we are dim.
 Jesus the Lord, the Life, High Priest and King,
 Fountain of love—of joy the Source and Spring.
 Blessèd are they whose centre is in Him,
 Lord of the sparrow and the seraphim.

On the 22nd of March, 1893, Isaac Sharp writes : "On board the *Gaelic* steamer, nearing 'The Golden Gate,' expecting to moor to-night near San Francisco and to land once more in that great city to-morrow.

"We sailed away from Yokohama, Japan, on the 9th inst., and have had a very fine run all the way, the last four days over 340 miles a day. The captain says he has no record of the like in the years he has been commander of this ship.

'Rock and roll and thud'

I am pretty well accustomed to by night and by day. Sometimes the combination is more than a match for pen, ink and paper in their triple union. I am very thankful for the visit to China, now of the past, for *the halo of peace is over it all*. For the present I am suffering much from climatic rheumatism ; the excessive damp of Chung King and the less excessive damp elsewhere has been powerful, too penetrating for both knees. . . . We have eight nation-

alities on board—*nine if we include the orang-outang*, on whom I called this afternoon and unexpectedly found his paw on mine, but very gently. He is on his way to Chicago, a four-year-old representative of his race at the World's Fair."

On the following day Isaac Sharp was refreshed by a call from J. Burt Davy, with whom he much enjoyed a time of prayer, and writes: "In a lively figure it almost seemed to me as if the bells of heaven were ringing. . . . My dear Lizzie arrived soon after seven and we had a time of much enjoyment."

The next entry we quote from his diary reminds us of John Woolman: "In a time of retirement recently, while under no small pressure of spirit as to my present incapability for travel, I was brought into a peaceful acquiescence with the Divine Will and felt to say in my heart, 'Thy Will be done,' even should the Lord see fit to end the service He has graciously given me, though short of the anticipated goal of cherished expectancy. Equally clear was the sense granted me that for the present my 'strength is to sit still' and await the issue. Again, I am privileged to say, As the Master willeth. Amen."

On the following day he writes: "Felt comforted in renewed dedication with the assurance graciously given me from the Lord, 'My hand is upon *thee* for good; I will heal thee; I have cared for thee, and will care for thee still'; and there uprose in my heart responsively, 'Glory and honour, and power, and might, and dominion, and praise be Thine; for Thou alone, O Lord, art worthy now and evermore.'"

The recovery of walking power was, however, to be a gradual one. After so prolonged a strain, a time of comparative rest must have been essential, even if exertion had been possible. On the 25th of April, he writes: "Wrestled in spirit; thought of the words, 'Ask, and ye shall receive.' So it is good to ask, and to ask with entreaty."

Early in May, 1893, Dr. Miller prescribed for the acute rheumatism, and in an interview a week later, asked his patient where he was going next. "I named," says Isaac Sharp, "the Indian Territory, Mexico, some meetings in the East, and some in Canada. This provoked a smile in consideration of its extent. He advised Mexico being left till the autumn by reason of malaria in summer months. Then followed the remark, 'You must remember that at your time of life, two years will tell as much as ten years before.' With a smile I rejoined, 'Doctor, I am a little deaf ; did I understand thee to say *will* or *may* tell as much as ten years before !' It was a very interesting and helpful interview. I am to see him again for heart examination."

On the following day he writes : "I have been greatly comforted and helped by a truly kind letter from J. B. Hodgkin with a message from Durham Quarterly Meeting, expressive of sympathy and unity with respect to my journey to the centre of China to visit the mission at Chung King."

Although Isaac Sharp had told Dr. Miller of the wide prospect of service which lay before him, he had no intention of entering on it until he had received a reply to a letter which he had written to the London "Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Oversight," which met in the middle of May. Without its further sanction, he did not feel free to continue his journeying. Meanwhile, there were frequent opportunities for fulfilling, in some measure, the ministry which he had received of the Lord. As might be expected, the meeting in London sent him a message of cordial encouragement, and many Friends spoke with great thankfulness of his labours. His farewell visit to the doctor was also most assuring ; he saw no reason why Isaac Sharp should not go as proposed to the Eastern States, Canada and Mexico, and "expected" that he would do it.

"This," says his patient, "was as an echo of my own thought and feeling, but I scarcely expected the doctor to

speak out so plainly. Moreover, he said there was nothing to indicate the probability of sudden death, with suitable care. His charge was exceedingly moderate."

To a nephew he writes: "I have said 'farewell' to my physician, who has given *much* advice and *little* physic."

Although Isaac Sharp's energies were a good deal taxed in preparations for his long journey, he was ready to marvel at finding that his strength was quite equal to the task.

About this time, he wrote the following lines for the birthday of his friend Sarah Gibbins, of Ettington, who had been dangerously ill:

Oh! my friend, we have been on the border land,
Nigh the gates of pearl and the song within;
The Lord of His mercy was near us then,
When the love watch was kept, and the veil was thin.

He is *near us still*, for earth's little while,
He is near to *thee* by night and by day;
May thy faith be firm, and thy mind serene,
On thy Saviour still resting—for this I pray.

Behold in the Light of Eternal Love
A place prepared by the Lord for thee,
Where earthly strife shall be known no more,
In the wonderful, wonderful yet to be!

Then for her daughter he adds these lines:

Be thy faith and trust unbroken,
For the Lord is over all,
Alike where the sunlight resteth,
And where the shadows fall.

Both mother and daughter were to precede him to the everlasting home.

Once more before his departure Isaac Sharp with his daughter and son-in-law attended College Park meeting. He writes: "Joel Bean gave a very impressive sermon: 'Ye believe in God, believe also in ME.' No effectual

cleansing save through the Blood of Christ. A gospel sermon with a ring of power, and clarion-like for clearness."

In the afternoon there was an informal Farewell Meeting. In Isaac Sharp's address he said: "In a crowded city when many are passing along, I have often felt, each one of these passers has a history, and so have we who are assembled here to-day. But the secret of each heart is known to the Lord, *who in very mercy will keep that which is committed to Him in simple faith for this life and for the next, for time and for eternity.*"

May we not believe that these words were uttered from a deep personal experience of their truth! Very wide is the ground they cover, recalling Wesley's lines:

"Take my soul and body's powers,
Take my memory, mind and will."

It was a great pleasure to him to meet, after his return to England, with some of his friends from China. A friend at Clapton writes: "During the time that my brother and sister Davidson were with us, Isaac Sharp came twice to breakfast, coming all the way from the City and reaching in time for our eight o'clock meal. It is very pleasant to look back to these occasions now, and to remember the simple words of prayer in which he commended us each and all, including the servants, to the loving care of our Heavenly Father."

CHAPTER XVII.

“It would seem to me that our Lord really did value social opportunities as such ; that it was more congenial to Him to mix with men than to avoid them ; and that He found His opportunities for the higher service to mankind naturally—so to speak—as He went along. . . . Must we not feel that it is right to aim at being as universal as our Master, both in our sympathies and our hopes ? ‘Length and breadth,’ as well as ‘height and depth,’ belong to the love which passeth knowledge, and is it not true that, as one of the most thoughtful of poets has said,

‘If Hope prostrate lie,
Love, too, will sink and die.’”

M.L.C.

ON the 3rd of June, 1893, Isaac Sharp reached Chicago, where his Gospel services were peculiarly acceptable and satisfactory. He says in his diary : “The well-known words of George Fox were very present with me, ‘We are nothing, Christ is all,’ and yet to a large extent it is equally true that our lives are what we make them, and our meetings too. Charles Lamb said a Friends’ meeting was ‘like a flock of sheep, many feeding as one.’ . . . Cast thy burden upon the Lord : the burden of sin, of sorrow, of bereavement, or any other. Pray without ceasing, not always repeating words of prayer, but living in the spirit of prayer. The sparrow taught me a lesson long ago, not always on the wing, but ever ready to mount upwards, just as the need might be.

“John T. Dorland spoke instructively, emphasising the four words, ‘*He careth for you.*’ C.F.C. remarked on the

ministry of the present day, that, in not a few instances, there is more of the intellectual and less of the earlier old Gospel prophecy."

When a second visit was paid to Chicago, a Friend of that city wrote : "We feel that there can be no question as to Isaac Sharp's *call* to the work in which he is now engaged, and as to the power of the Holy Spirit accompanying him."

To a nephew, Isaac Sharp writes : "New England Yearly Meeting closed on the 14th, in joint session, sealed with a solemn and comforting evidence of the presence of the Lord, that overshadowing which may be realised with thanksgiving, but which words may fail to utter. . . . The pastoral question came up at one of the meetings. A great diversity of sentiment was manifest and freely uttered, but love covered all. On this very important subject, New England Yearly Meeting may be considered as wisely conservative."

After a Friend who was present had alluded to a narrow escape from serious accident, Isaac Sharp quoted the text, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." He added : "I believe our dear brother is a witness of this deliverance. I have said in many lands and among many people, that

' They who mark the hand of Providence,
Shall never want a Providence to mark.'

Nevertheless, we are all children of Adam, and liable as others to the various ills pertaining to our common lot, but the Lord is able to interpose and send His angel."

At the meeting on ministry and oversight, an hour or two was spent over Isaac Sharp's certificates for religious service—his "parchments" he often called them.

He tells a nephew that "cordial welcome all round, prayer and praise with testimony and thanksgiving followed in continuous flow," and adds : "This morning the 1890 certificate was read, and followed by another outpouring.

It was dealt with as an *object lesson*. I felt humbled under it to tears."

In the journal he writes : " In the Yearly Meeting the pastoral system came forward. I remarked : ' I have not much to say, but my heart is full. The subject is much before Friends in England with deep concern. The authority and government of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit are involved. If the pastor take charge of the congregation, others are practically shut out. I have seen and own the blessing in pastoral work ; so I can and do give the right hand of fellowship to the Salvation Army, but I am not prepared to adopt their lines of action.' "

He was at New Bedford on the "flower day" for the prisoners, and had an opportunity of addressing them. He spoke of how chains and fetters of sin are more deadly than prison bonds : of deliverance for all who feel their need and flee to the loving Saviour. He told them that long ago he had tried wine, spirits, and tobacco, but gave them all up, once and for ever, and at the age of eighty-seven was there to tell the tale.

Early in July we find him at Toronto, after attending Canada Yearly Meeting, almost too heavily burdened with "overdue and hugely increasing correspondence," but rejoicing that he can once more go up and down stairs without difficulty.

In a letter to a nephew, after reference to some of his relatives, he says : " Katherine Backhouse (of the bygone) once said to me, ' I sometimes feel as if we might be made up of sympathy.' I realise how strong are the claims for it all."

In reference to one of the meetings he had attended since leaving California, he remarks : " *The* pastor was away, so there was conscious sense of more liberty. There is a mighty difference between a pastor in a meeting and *the* pastor *over* a meeting."

Much service lay before him in Canada. On the 27th of July, he says in a letter to his daughter : " Yesterday

was one of my memorial days : 26th of Seventh Month, 1842, thy dear mother gently passed away at the 'Low-lights.' Her face was radiant in expression as she gently breathed her life away ; it might, in remembrance, be fitly likened to the heavenly mould."

As we turn over the pages of the diary in its least eventful records, the thought arises whether there may not have been as much service accomplished for the Master, whose will was so dear to him, in private as in public, and by influence unconsciously exerted, as by definite effort to help others. His heartfelt interest in the young and in the old, his sympathy with the sick and the sorrowful and the bereaved, must have opened the door of many hearts to heavenly messages.

In the outline account of the Yearly Meeting at Wilmington, Ohio, he says : " My *parchments* were read, and a minute of record was entered on the books. The Clerk read it. Then came a new departure, new at least to me. The Clerk said those who wished to unite with the minute and to welcome our 'aged Friend' might now do so, whereupon the whole Yearly Meeting rose to their feet simultaneously. There was a touch of the overwhelming in it, but no room to call in question the genuine character of welcome to which age no doubt largely contributed."

Again, in reference to Ohio Yearly Meeting, he says : " My *parchments* were read, and many warm welcomes followed. My presence was regarded as an incentive to work in the harvest field. I ventured to say that I had long felt that the trial of faith and patience through which I had passed was not for myself alone. One Friend remarked : ' My being here to-day I owe to thee. When I saw what thou art doing at thy time of life, I took fresh courage and came hither.' "

Isaac Sharp's diaries contain a large variety of matter. One entry records the following confession in reference to duty left undone : " Several Friends, on C. W.'s invitation, called in. The interview was a pleasant one, but sadly

marred by a want of watchfulness on my part. Prayer should have been offered. I have felt this deeply, and am sorry for it. The Lord, of His tender compassion, has passed His pardoning love upon it.'"

Do we not see here that he could endure no earth-born cloud to rest between him and his Lord; that there had been the prompt and honest confession of failure, and the trustful laying hold of the promised forgiveness? How well does Andrew Murray say, "What did Peter do? The very opposite of what most do. What did he do when he began to sink? That very moment, without one word of self reproach or self condemnation, he cried, 'Lord, help me!' I remember the time in my spiritual life when that became clear to me, for up to that time when I failed, my only thought was to reproach and condemn myself, and I thought that would do me good. I found it did not; and I learn from Peter that my work is the very moment I fail, to say, 'Jesus, Master, help me!' And the very moment I say that, Jesus does help me. . . . The Living Jesus is near, so gracious and so mighty."

Isaac Sharp writes at another time in reference to an agnostic who said he was very happy: "Alas! alas! 'If the light that be in you be darkness how great is that darkness.' 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man.' I feel deeply there will yet be a tremendous awakening; the Lord of His mercy grant with quickening power that it be on this side the grave. Oh, it is sad, very sad, deeply sad."

In reference to one of the meetings, he writes: "The singing as heard from the street was on the vehement side. I walked in and sat down, and soon after, prayer was offered, but the responses here and there competed with the voice of the suppliant. I waited awhile and then embraced an opening, rising with the words, 'I will be as the dew unto Israel'; although these words were for the chosen people of the Lord we may have our share in the refreshing of the heavenly

dew, so gentle, yet so reviving, and so vitalising. It is good to take in as well as to give out, and to exercise the receptive power. I spoke of an old woman's broken pitcher set in the place for receiving rain, a poor earthen vessel yet full to the brim! There was no shouting of 'glory' or 'hallelujah' to this, and a wonderful quiet followed. . . . I have received a large share of kindness, *in meeting and out of it.*" We are not surprised to find him writing, early in September: "All this 'wear and tear' is wonderful, and I accept the ability for it as from the loving hand of our Father in heaven"; nor at an entry in the diary of a different kind, some twelve days later: "Feeble somewhat. . . . Under a covering of solemnity, I asked counsel of the Lord—whether this present feebleness is a prelude to the abandonment of the work before me or to be accepted as a passing cloud? A sense of the latter prevailed. In looking to a continuance of this service, the words rose up as a benediction; 'Fear not for I am with thee; be not dismayed for I am thy God. Forward and fear not. Look unto Me and thou shalt see.' So I take courage and look to the Lord for strength, and the peace of the Prince of Peace is upon it. With all this, comes a gracious measure of confidence and heaven-sent trust. Amen."

At the concluding sitting of Western Yearly Meeting, Isaac Sharp said: "It is comforting and refreshing to me to believe that in love we met, and in greater love we part; for the Lord has graciously drawn us near to Him and near to one another. I long earnestly that Christ should be owned as *Head over all things to the Church and to every individual member of it*, living in allegiance and subjection to Him; and that the communication of the will of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit should not only be owned among us but be also a reality to each of us, the spiritual ear being open to hear the voice of the Lord."

Yearly Meeting followed Yearly Meeting in rapid succession and the strain of the meetings, the travelling, and

the constantly changing social intercourse might have heavily taxed the strength of a man whose years did not number fourscore and seven.

Indiana Yearly Meeting was succeeded by that of Kansas. In one of the sessions when the subject of worship was under consideration, Isaac Sharp rose and said: "The subject before us is of vital importance and intense in its individuality. Our attendance of worship is a voluntary act between the Creator and the created. The command is plain, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God*. Shall man the creature, liable to be 'snuffed out' of human existence in a moment, refuse to obey the command. The Lord has the right to the *first place* in each one of our hearts. . . . The heathen with their stocks and stones, and rags, and bones, and fetiches seem to me to be groping after something. There is a saying of Augustine that has come down to us, 'THOU hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in THEE.' Moreover, we have set before us, 'They that worship the Father must worship Him in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.'" During the course of the Yearly Meeting, Isaac Sharp alluded to the widely-spread use of tobacco as "a sensual and deleterious habit, inducing cancer and other complaints, with heart disease and death. We see in the newspapers, 'died suddenly of heart disease,' and in many cases I believe it should be 'died of nicotine.'"

Much oppression from a severe cold on the chest did not interfere with the vigorous use of his voice, whenever he believed himself commissioned to speak. In a letter to a nephew, written on the 12th of October, he says: "Kansas Yearly Meeting closed solidly. It has been a favoured time from first to last; a time for which to be devoutly thankful. I could not unite *in all* I heard and saw, but divine power was manifest in our midst. There was not *too much* silence, but more of it than at some other Yearly Meetings, and not a few dear brethren and sisters

spoke with authority and power to the edification of the assembled Church. I have met with a remarkable degree of kindness. Not a few, old and young, have spoken of this visit as a sort of 'inspiration,' as showing what the Lord is able to do in a case of far-advanced life. Eight Yearly Meetings in succession, and a heavy chest cold have told upon me somewhat. Yesterday it was *sultry*; to-day a *stove* is comforting, a difference probably of forty degrees. . . . It seems wonderful to think of the probability of meeting thee face to face within six months, but a good deal of strength-testing lies between this and then. I expect to start on the 17th inst. for the Indian Territory, with the companionship of Charles W. Goddard."

This visit is alluded to in a letter as being an eventful period. After visiting Kick-a-poo Mission, the Friends went to Skia-took, and afterwards travelled on to the Modoc Indians. Isaac Sharp appreciated their earnest listening to his words, and their numerous testimonies of love for the Master and joy in His service. Then came the Wyandottes, amongst whom, in a crowded meeting, the power of the Lord was manifest.

In a letter, after referring to his intention of attending Baltimore Yearly Meeting, he says: "The residue of my journeyings is not likely to be the lightest portion of it; but the watchword given me in 1877 is fresh in its freshness still,

'Forward, and fear not; let thy faith be firm.'

Some may think it a bold thing to continue in this service in my eighty-eighth year. My own feeling is that it would be a bolder thing to relinquish it. With chastened but reliant trust, I desire to look to the Lord for guidance." In his next letter he says: "Baltimore Yearly Meeting is like London Yearly Meeting in miniature. It has a membership of one thousand and something over. I have greatly enjoyed being here. It has been a season rich in the favour of the Lord. Samuel Beck and myself are here

from England. New Year's Day, 1893, found me in mid-China. New Year's Day, 1894, I expect to spend in Mexico. Florida has never long been absent from my mind *all the way*, and I feel easy in spirit in looking to go thither. . . . Much is going on in Europe. Much also in little England, of which a small part only reaches me. It is well, for my days are very full."

On the 28th of November he writes from Richmond, Virginia: "My valued friend John M. Watson and I are here from Florida—semi-tropical Florida—where the weather is like England at her summer best! Few places in my pilgrimage have left a deeper sense of abiding satisfaction in the retrospect. The Lord was our helper *all the way*. . . . George Gillett's death is a heavy blow; the end of a noble life in my life-time; it is very touching, and I feel it much. I little thought of this when he and I parted. My days have been very fully occupied—correspondence left out in the cold, and my log a myth. I have had more throat trouble than common, but on the whole have been remarkably well, though sometimes feeling on the edge of a volcano. But still the gracious word is,

'Forward, and fear not.'

So I go on in simple but fearless faith, graciously enabled to commit my way unto the Lord, rejoicing in the assurance that He is over all." He writes next from Baltimore: "I am kept a good deal within doors from a threatening of return of my old complaint. My home is with Dr. Richard H. Thomas, whose devoted kindness I have cause to commemorate. His brother, Dr. James Carey Thomas, calls in, so I have these dear friends as my helpers and prescribers."

Nine days later he writes again: "Medical skill and good nursing are all I could desire as a means to an end. But the note is again sounded, 'Make haste slowly.' Mexico is still in the ascendant, and W. A. Walls holds

himself in readiness for me. My present prompting with regard to it is still in the direction of the Icelandic *Auffram, Onward, Forward, Advance*; the very antipodes of turning back."

A fortnight later, writing from Philadelphia, he says: "Once more I am as a 'wonder unto many,' having been blessed with a remarkably rapid recovery. The doctors planned for me to stop awhile at Atlantic City to recruit, but I feel much more easy in looking forward to leaving here for St. Louis. My friend William A. Walls is to meet me there."

Meanwhile he often realised the lessening of constitutional power, and felt old as he had rarely done before. Nevertheless he looked hopefully forward to the visit to the Mexican Mission. On the 5th of January, 1894, he writes in his diary: "In solemn meditation I have taken a review of many years, and am humbled under it. But the Lord is merciful and gracious, and under His shadow, looking unto Jesus, I am thankful to rest in His love. Hereunto I have been wonderfully helped, and am bound to trust. . . . Feeble most of the day, now and then reclining. Atmosphere damp, very, and oppressive, and depressing too." In reference to his companion, W. A. Walls, he says: "He is a noble example of trust in the Lord, his vigorous mind and will giving place to a child-like submission to our Father in heaven, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. More than once he has faced death without fear. When deadly weapons were prepared, the Lord was pleased to interfere, and it may surely be said, 'his life was given him for a prey.'"

About a week later Isaac Sharp had a threatening of critical illness, but all the time, "In the spiritual ear was sounded, go in faith, and when asked if telegrams should be despatched to cancel those already sent, he emphatically negatived the suggestion. On the following morning he rose at 5.30, and after a good night felt wonderfully ready for the start." He admits that this

journey was noteworthy for its "powerful jolt and jar," and that in one instance this was immediately followed by headache over the brow and temples, followed by pain at the back part of the brain, something resembling a concussion." On the 9th of January Isaac Sharp and W. A. Walls left Houston, Texas, by an evening train for Monterey, Mexico, a town with 50,000 inhabitants, and went from thence to Victoria, Tamaulipas, the head-quarters of the Mexican Mission of Friends. In a letter to England he remarks : "I still feel the grip of influenza upon me now and then. The marvel is, so it appears to me, that more of it is not apparent. So I venture forth with a fresh warrant, 'Go in faith.' To the praise of the Lord be it written." An hour and a quarter after his arrival at Victoria, Isaac Sharp was taking part in a mission meeting. He felt it a "joyful consolation to have thus far reached the goal," 3,000 miles from Philadelphia, and to share the fellowship and kindness of Samuel A. Purdie and his wife, who had been labouring for more than twenty-two years in the Friends' Mission, established in the midst of a Roman Catholic population. They were about the first of the pioneer missionaries. Isaac Sharp soon visited Gomez Farias, which is situated among the Mexican mountains, some 3,000 feet above sea level. Several members of that meeting remembered his visit to them ten years earlier, and spoke of their gladness at his return. This meeting and the visit in general were satisfactory.

Accompanied by Samuel Purdie, Isaac Sharp afterwards visited the Friends' Mission at Matehuala. A Friend residing there wrote : "Aside from their edifying addresses in the seven public and social meetings which they attended, the company and example of this aged pilgrim have been an inspiration to us."

This service near its close, Isaac Sharp writes from Victoria : "I am resting here a day or two after a very close test of strength and endurance. Less severe jolting in Oregon, was followed by a month's severe illness."

A stage ride to Escaudon at the foot of the Great Chain, Sierra Madre, was followed by seven miles on horse-back; three miles of the distance he had to encounter an ascent of 2,500 feet. It was no wonder that he was exhausted, but after a night's rest, he was able to visit all the mission buildings and several families, and give an address at the village school before attending the evening meeting, which was full, notwithstanding rain and wind. He was earnestly engaged in ministry and prayer. The return journey was even more fatiguing than the ascent had been, none the less so from the ravages of "seed-ticks, red bugs," and other tropical insects. Yet he was able to say, "with deep thankfulness, not only have I not suffered from the journey (so it appears at present), but I came back in better case than I went." Then he adds the significant words—which show that then, as heretofore, he ran none of these risks merely on his own responsibility: "The dear Lord *said*, said distinctly, 'Go in Faith,' and so in faith I ventured."

It does not seem out of place here, to make a passing reference to his valued companion Samuel A. Purdie, who, though in the prime of life, only survived him a few months. It has been said that if the name of *Friend* is held in honour all through Mexico and South West Texas, we owe it chiefly to the faithful life of Samuel A. Purdie. Great and varied were the difficulties he encountered. To work on unmoved through siege and in the midst of shot, through small-pox epidemics and yellow fever plague, takes one kind of courage, but it requires an even loftier kind to work on day after day, with head, heart, and hand, amidst superstition and poverty, bigotry and daily discouragements. He was "exceedingly careful not to claim any unusual Christian experience, but none who knew him could doubt his consecration."

Arrived once more at the home of his daughter at Berryessa, California, Isaac Sharp remarks in a letter: "It is a great joy to me that I have been permitted to accomplish

the Mexican visit, and to feel assured that the Lord was very graciously with me *all the way*. I am much enjoying a season of—comparatively—quiet rest, but many claims come in to the setting aside of the triple use of pen, ink and paper.”

Again on the 10th of March he writes : “ I hope to sail in time to attend Dublin Yearly Meeting, *if so it may be*, for at present I am under the care of two doctors living near together, one being consulted on account of sudden deafness. The other professional, Dr. Miller, was with me once or twice in my great illness, and I felt to need his advice ; he tells me I am in better case than I was twelve months ago, that my physical condition generally is improved. I find his treatment helpful, but I am an old man, and need not wonder that an old man’s ailments should compass me about. I do not apprehend my friends will think the mind has grown much older. . . . It feels very wonderful, in anticipation to be, in little more than two months, once again within the sound of the ‘ Bells of St. Botolph,’ Bishopsgate, their quarter chimes and the many associations they awaken. I remember picturing those well-known city bells holding their confab together on the *possible* coming events of the Yearly Meeting of 1890. . . . And now in the looming of the Yearly Meeting of 1894 I look back upon the guidance of the Lord and His protecting care, His goodness and His grace, with the deep desire to walk watchfully and wisely amid all that may fall to my lot, weak in myself, but consciously strong in the Lord. . . . Touchingly came the tidings of the death of my old friend Joshua Green. We were young together at Walden when he and his brother were apprentices at Day and Robson’s, and I was assistant in that concern. I know *all* the family so well.”

Then after three days in bed he writes : “ Dr. Miller is eminently skilful and most attentive, *but* ever be it remembered, the Lord is over all ! . . . The Doctor is still watching my case. He is a physician and specialist, second

to none I know. . . . Sivert* will see me off for Europe. He is abundantly kind and careful of me in every way."

Before we see Isaac Sharp embark in the *Campania*, let us read a few more remarks about him from the pen of his faithful friend, Joel Bean :

"Among Friends in America there can be but few homes where his name is not familiar, and but few, comparatively, of our members upon whom his personality has not left its impress. Very vivid is the mark he has made and the memory he has left.

"It is the memory of a very distinct individuality . . . of a genial spirit, a loving heart. He was a man of wide embracing charity, of large hope, and of confiding trust.

"How cheerily he would often say :

'Is not HIS way the wisest ?
Is not HIS will the best ?
And in perfect acquiescence,
Is there not perfect rest ?'

"One of the last messages from his pen was a note to Benjamin H. Jones, in which he wrote these characteristic lines :

'A sweet word of cheer
For the glad New Year ;
Jesus is near.

'Jesus is near,
A sweet word of cheer
For *all* the year.'

"Endearing and enduring will his memory be in the hearts of thousands who knew him and loved him, and especially so in the hearts of those who knew him most."

Isaac Sharp's journey across the Continent, in company with his son-in-law, was a very favourable one, and we come across the characteristic information that the acquaintance was made of several congenial travelling companions.

* Isaac Sharp's son-in-law.

In a note to a niece, written from Cork, he says: "The *Campania* doctor resolutely disputed the correctness of my birth record, and wanted to rob me of some fifteen to twenty years, and playfully said at parting, 'Eighty-eight. Young!'"

In the closing hours of Dublin Yearly Meeting, Isaac Sharp spoke from the text, "Work while it is called to-day." He spoke of how he had once heard William Forster say, "The working days of a man's life *are but few.*" The supreme love of God would sanctify all our labour and our cares. If the first place were kept for Him, all would come into inward harmony. If, day by day, we came nearer to Him and obeyed the words of His dear Son, "*Abide in Me,*" we should live here and hereafter to His praise.

When in London Yearly Meeting, after giving a summary of his travels, he said: "Bear in your hearts that when the Lord has service for His people, He can enable them to do it. There *is* a Providence over us. Bear this in mind, when your eyes are holden, *the Lord reigneth.*" He then spoke of how two portions of his service alone were unfulfilled, the South of France and Syria.

Among the many Friends who spoke after Isaac Sharp had resumed his seat was one, Joseph Allen Baker, who said he had met with many across the Atlantic whom Isaac Sharp had visited, and had been present at the Farewell Meeting at San Francisco, and he recalled the wonderful blessing of that hour as a time of a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit."

CHAPTER XVIII.

“ When thinking of any new undertaking, ask, Is this agreeable to the mind of God? Is it for His glory? If it is not for His glory, you must have nothing to do with it. Having settled that a certain course is for the glory of God, begin it in His Name and continue it to the end. Trust in God, depend only on Him. Wait on Him. Expect great things from Him. Faint not if the blessing tarries. Pray, pray, pray. Above all, rely alone upon the merits of our adorable Lord, that, according to His infinite merits, and not your own, the prayers you offer and the work you do will be accepted.”

George Müller.

“ **A**LMOST over-powering,” writes Isaac Sharp, “ were the congratulations on my safe return to England. It well-nigh overcame me, and yet I felt the love wrapped up in it, and the inward thanksgiving with praise to the Lord for His preserving care.”

It must have been cheering to Him to be told by Dr. Bell Taylor that his eyes were wonderfully little altered since he had last examined them. By the advice of a friend he had an interview with an aurist, which he thus describes in a letter to his daughter :

“ ‘ How old are you ? ’

“ ‘ On the verge of eighty-eight.’

“ He said not a word, but up went *both* his shoulders with a start as if suddenly electrified. Then he looked at both ears. ‘ The left is better than the right,’ said he. Then came his quaint and concentrated dictum : ‘ Let them alone and buy a trumpet.’ Much of what is said to me comes to me as a murmur ; not so when anyone is near me with a clear, gentle voice.”

He had not been at home a fortnight before he set out for his eighth and last visit to Norway. Dr. R. H. and Anna Thomas and he travelled together. Writing from Stavanger, he says : " There were two crowded meetings yesterday, larger, they say, than for years, many of the townsfolk coming in, among them a man of gentlemanly appearance (once a pupil of Asbjorn Kloster), who sent a sketch of an old man's wanderings to an evening paper and suggested that the said old man was to be present at the Quaker's meeting on Sunday. The two meetings were held in much solemnity, 'visiting Friends' and others taking part. The Spirit of the Lord was manifestly in our midst. I am favoured to feel abundantly satisfied of being under the guiding hand of the Lord."

The little sketch of Isaac Sharp published in the Stavanger *People's Newspaper*, contains these quaint words : " When we look upon this modest little man and listen to his burning zeal for the word of God, it is as if one stands before one of the patriarchs of the Bible."

A young Norwegian who was present at these meetings wrote of them as " blessed " times, and of the great joy it was once again to hear " dear old Isaac Sharp." He adds : " Dr. Thomas is a highly-gifted man. His winning manner and his joyful, bold preaching make him a powerful instrument in his Lord's service. . . . I believe that the visit of these Friends will be a great blessing to the Friends in Norway."

On the 15th of June, 1894, Isaac Sharp writes : " I have a peaceful retrospect of Kvinesdal. The journey was toilsome and strength-testing, but it is a joy to have been there. Dear old Tollay Roisland, one year younger than myself, rejoiced at our meeting once more. Simple-hearted kindness abounded to the full and the tokens of welcome were many and cheering. Thorstein Bryne was with me. We were in an open boat last evening for about four hours ; it was cool at night, not to say cold ; two overcoats were not too much, *plus* a rug over the knees. The moonlight

and the residue of departed daylight made the travel easy. The westerly wind died away, and we got to Flekkefiord between ten and eleven p.m. I got to bed at midnight. Rheumatic pain and weakness of the knees were present a good deal on this journey. . . . The days as they pass in this brief visit to Norway, leave a deep impress on my spirit of the loving-kindness of the Lord, bringing to remembrance in lively appreciation the first visit here with Edwin O. Tregelles and John Budge well-nigh fifty years ago !”

At that time, some of the Friends in Norway were subjected to a severe persecution. In one place Isaac Sharp now found, built on a wooded knoll among the mountains, near a fiord, a charmingly situated meeting-house, which had taken the place of a house, no longer standing, in which a small room reached by a ladder had served as a place of spiritual worship.

This visit to Norway was but a short one. On the 29th of June we find him in London, and in his diary he writes : “ Rose betimes, took the train at Aldersgate for Camden Road Station ; walked from thence to the well-known 312, and had a brief converse with my beloved friend J. B. Braithwaite before the bell rang. Only four sat down at the breakfast table, prior to which J. B. B. read a morning portion, and it fell to my lot to offer prayer for the dear absent mother and her husband, and all belonging to them present and absent to the third generation. My heart was expanded largely in love, and utterance was given to it with much tender feeling and in wide embrace.”

His homeward journey to Ettington was a fatiguing one as from incorrect information there was a long delay. In recording this he adds the remark, “ After all, though very disappointing, it is not so bad as a broken leg.”

The carriage was very warm. A pleasant gentleman sat opposite, who proposed to have the window closed because he was just out of a Turkish bath. Now Isaac Sharp had a weakness for Turkish baths, and this

topic soon led to further conversation, and the stranger remarked that he had not known that the Society of Friends had any missionaries. Isaac Sharp told him of his own call to the work of the Lord—a call he realised to be direct from Him. "How do you know the call?" was the next question, in reply to which Isaac Sharp gave him a little of his own experience. They had some further conversation on spiritual themes. One of the texts quoted by Isaac Sharp was, "Hereby we know that He abideth in us by the Spirit which He hath given." "I think," said the gentleman, "I shall take those last words as the text for my sermon to-morrow."

Soon afterwards Isaac Sharp writes: "Many of my friends say I look wonderfully well. I often am sensible, nevertheless, of the inevitable effect of added days and that manifestly diminished power may come at any time, yet there lives in my heart an abiding consciousness that the Lord of life and glory is abundantly able to renew my strength from day to day, and grant ability for the completion of the service still before me in often remembrance for visiting the South of France this autumn, and Syria, should it be so, prior to the Yearly Meeting of 1895."

A call on the aged Elizabeth Hanbury, at Richmond, was much enjoyed by Isaac Sharp; it seems, indeed, to have been as a brook by the way to both. She was then (1894) in the first year of her second century.* Her visitor noted that the old sweetness and brightness of expression accompanied her smile. She spoke of her great comfort in her surroundings and was well able to sustain a conversation with the aid of her tube. She quoted with emphasis the text, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to His mercy He saved us." She had felt great interest in her visitor's pilgrimages and alluding to the service still lying before him in the South of France and Syria, she told him of her comfort in believing that strength would be given him for its fulfilment.

* Elizabeth Hanbury is still living, 1898.

Before they parted, these aged servants of the Lord spoke together with deep interest of the perpetual presence of the Lord Jesus.

At the Quarterly Meeting held at Newcastle, Isaac Sharp gave a résumé of his recent distant service, beginning with the words, "O, magnify the Lord with me!" Dr. Thomas Hodgkin afterwards remarked that to some it might seem a pleasant thing thus to travel in foreign lands, but such a journey in advanced life was a journey of dedication in the service of the Lord.

A week later, in one of London's busy streets, the kindly, courteous old man pauses to interchange a few words with a lady friend, who at parting said: "I often think of a sermon of thine in 1867. It has been a help to me all the days since then." He was cheered by this remark which brought to his memory another made half-a-century ago in the Shetland Isles, "Eternity alone will reveal what these meetings mean."

At home again at Ettington, he is pleased by a most kind and friendly call from Dr. Nason who thought his former patient was not looking a day older than when they last met, and he reminded Isaac Sharp of the words he had spoken then, "I go at the call of the Lord for life or for death."

In a letter written about this time Isaac Sharp gives a story of an earnest old woman, a Wesleyan, who when told there was to be no meeting on a certain night, quietly made answer, "Yes, there *will* be." When, on her return she was asked how many were there, "Oh," said she, reverently, "it was a blessed meeting. There were four of us." "Four?" "Yes, four, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and me, a glorious meeting!"

In August, 1894, Isaac Sharp attended a Farewell Meeting with the missionaries bound for Madagascar. It was presided over by John T. Dorland, and Isaac Sharp was asked to sit beside him. The missionaries were William and Lucy Johnson, and Ernest Robson. A year or two

later two of the number had won the martyr's crown, and the chairman, seemingly in full vigour of body, mind, and spirit, had "fulfilled his course," whilst the aged Isaac Sharp still bore testimony to the goodness of his God. Of that evening he wrote: "It was a solemn season, and one of quiet power. William Johnson spoke. . . . Ernest Robson, having given his young life to the Lord, goes forth to Madagascar at the age of twenty-two, there to live and labour. He also spoke briefly. My heart was in it, and I was glad to be there. John T. Dorland read a portion from John iv. and commented on it, with his singularly illustrative power. He quoted, 'In all their afflictions HE was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them.' Then followed a season of reverent waiting upon the Lord. It might be said in truth, 'It was good to be there.' It fell to my lot to offer prayer in which I felt helped. There was no lack of vocal service, but it was a season of deep feeling more than of prolonged utterance. . . . John Sims, recently returned from Madagascar, also spoke. John T. Dorland gave me the opportunity to address those assembled. I did so out of the fulness of my heart, in love and sympathy. 'What *thy* hand findeth to do,' etc., *personal* application. The perpetual presence of the Lord Jesus. The mainspring of labour must be love. After a time of great solemnity in silence, John T. Dorland offered prayer, and made touching allusion to the tender ties and the separation. I feel, as I write, that in the severance alluded to there is also a service for the Lord. Many were the loving farewell greetings. John Sims told me that the natives and others still speak of my visit, and tell of the old Isaac Sharp."

About this time he attended a Monthly Meeting at Kingston. In the meeting he spoke from the text, "Iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." This was refreshing in daily life, how much more so when met for the worship of the Lord, and with a blended sense of the nearness of His love. Isaac Sharp

spent that night at the house of his "valued and indefatigable friend" Edwin R. Ransome, and after supper they conversed till bed-time about the pending visit to France, and the route, etc.

Frequent mention is made in the journals to Isaac Sharp's widowed invalid sister Rebecca Swann. Of a visit paid to her in her home at Dulwich, about this time, he says : " Her sweet, loving face was beautiful to look upon ! I bore away with me a delightful *brain photo*, exquisite in expression, and vividly before me. Her voice was low, and I could only partially make out her loving words. But it was, and is, a joy to see that smile, and to realise that we were once more together."

Half-past eight on the same evening found Isaac Sharp at the Hart's Lane Mission, attending a Farewell Meeting to Esther Beckwith, who was about to sail for Chung King, as the bride elect of Isaac Mason, who had been Isaac Sharp's fellow-voyager when ascending the Yangtse River. " China was much before me," he writes. " I spoke towards the end for about twenty minutes ; the meeting was over at 10.15 p.m."

To Isaac Sharp's journals at home and abroad are frequently confided reference to serious symptoms of illness, whilst record is also made of the prompt and patient application of remedies. Sometimes he mentions these symptoms in letters to a nephew, adding playfully, and yet in earnest too, some such remark as, " Tell it not in Gath," or, " Give no hint of this,"—so much did he dread anything becoming known which might make others think him unfit for finishing the service to which he believed the Lord had called him. He did not " count his life dear " unto himself, so that he might finish his " course with joy," and the ministry which he had " received," much as he might have hesitated to apply the great Apostle's words to his own case. We are not surprised in the middle of September to find him " thoughtful"—he seems to abjure the word *anxious*—about his symptoms.

"Another lesson," he writes, "for earnest and confiding *trust*, in looking to France and the pending visit there." Twelve days later he is *en route* for France. Of his companion he writes: "Samuel Alexander takes care for the expenditure and general arrangements for the pending journey; ready, able, willing, and executive, answering to the four points of the compass. We had our evening portion together before going to rest."

In the Friends' meeting at Fontanès he spoke from the text, "A seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation." "The feeling on my own mind," he says, "was that for more than a century there have been among the people of these parts those who have borne the name of *Friend*, serving the Lord from one generation to another ere they fell on sleep, and that for those who still survive, younger and older, there is a place to fill, and to fill for Him, who is Lord of all, and to fill it to His praise. There is a gracious assurance granted me of being in my right place in this southern part of France. . . . The wind was very searching, and I felt it a good deal. It was between nine and ten p.m. before we got to our quarters. A day of sixteen hours stress and strain, mental and physical, after a night of considerable unrest, rendered a prompt retiring to rest desirable."

On the following Sunday he writes: "Breakfast, followed by earnest prayer which arose in my heart with the committal of the day and the way to the Lord under no small exercise of spirit, and need of heavenly help and grace. . . . At 4 p.m. a meeting was held for the public. Marie Bernard was a lively and fluent interpreter, ready in catching the spirit of the words as well as their intended teaching. I could not doubt the presence of the Lord was known in our midst. My friend, Samuel Alexander, took part acceptably."

The Friends of Congénies must have been cheered by this visit. The meeting-house there is the only one in the whole of France. Family visits were paid, and a mothers' meeting and infant school were visited.

To a nephew, Isaac Sharp writes from Nîmes : " I expect to be in Paris on the 28th inst. Justine Dalencourt was very kind to us in 1890 when Captain and Marianna Pim watched over me in that vast city, somewhat doubtful of the issue, whether for life or death. I do not forget all this, nor the over-ruling providence of God our Saviour. It is my privilege to feel no manner of doubt as to our being here—Samuel Alexander and I—in the ordering of the Lord. After this, Syria alone remains of the unfulfilled under the certificate of 1890. ' Truly this is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes.' I close, half asleep, for midnight post."

To the same correspondent he writes from Valence : " Yesterday was a day of days, Captain and Marianna Pim's silver wedding. About sixty guests at the afternoon reception ; five Protestant pastors, a Russian lady, two or three Roman Catholics, a *military* Christian with a sword at his side—more safe within than without the scabbard ; moreover, a lady of eleven years residence from Stoke Newington who interpreted for me fluently, never once having to hesitate or cough up a difficult word ! It is a joy to be here, and it feels to me a part of my service."

His friends Captain and Mrs. Pim have been diligent workers in connection with the McAll Mission, holding meetings in the mission boat in some of the rivers of France, meetings which have had much of the Lord's blessing.

In his journal, Isaac Sharp writes : " A hymn of thanksgiving is in my heart in the renewed remembrance of the loving care of our Father in heaven." In reference to a meeting at St. Gilles he says : " My mind was under great exercise and I felt helped in the delivery of my message to young and old. . . . There is to me solid comfort in the retrospect of this visit." In his account of one little meeting we find the words, " A silence not of death, a stillness not of the grave, but a measure of living silence in the presence of the Lord Jesus." When addressing some

children, he told them of the Modoc Indians and of the little Modoc girl who said, "I love Jesus because He was the very first that did love me."

By the writer's side is a letter from Samuel Alexander, with a few recollections of this time in France. He writes: "Isaac Sharp could not speak a word of French. When in the railway carriages he would read, not very clear print, without spectacles, and when I remarked to fellow travellers that he was '*quatre-vingt-huit ans*,' they would lift up their hands in astonishment. . . . His addresses all abounded with so much of love as to be an exemplification of the Master he was representing. Kindness and thoughtfulness for others were marked features of his character, and so loving was he that wherever he went there was at once a feeling of loving interest and sympathy shown for those visited. The meeting at the Rue St. Honoré in Paris, held in one of the mission halls of Mr. McAll, was a memorable time. In that very hall Louise Michel used to tirade against the authorities, so that the police were in terror when on duty there.

"At times, Isaac Sharp would entertain his friends by most graphic accounts of his early missionary visits to Greenland, Iceland, and Norway, and keep them spell-bound for one or two hours."

The kindness and thoughtfulness for others above referred to led him to take an interest in their interests for their sake.

A niece writes: "Not long ago he met Louie — at — station quite unexpectedly. He not only recognised her in a moment, but knew in a moment just what to ask after—her dogs. As soon as he had shaken hands with her, although it was at the booking office, where an old man might have been forgiven if he had been too much occupied with his own affairs to notice anyone else, he said, 'How are the dogs?' Pre-eminently he had 'a heart at leisure from itself.'"

A family connection writes : " I remember a good many years ago, when I was very young and very enthusiastic about Tennyson, that Isaac Sharp came to pay us a visit, and it fell to my lot to take him to Clevedon, Somerset, and show him the lions. I do not now remember what passed, but I know we had a very happy day (his very presence seemed to bring brightness and cheeriness), and I have no doubt I discoursed largely on the Poet Laureate and *In Memoriam*, as we walked by that ' broad water of the west ' and the ' cold grey stones ' of the sea ; and I told out all my girlish enthusiasms. Years passed, and other idols succeeded one another in my imagination, till I had almost forgotten my girlish delight in Tennyson, when again the dear man visited us. He had travelled thousands of miles in the meantime, and had many other thoughts and interests to occupy his mind, but such was his sympathetic care for other's concerns that he came straight to me, saying :

" ' Thou art a lover of Tennyson, and I thought of thee the other day when I found a beautiful little piece of his in a recent magazine. I copied it for thee.' He handed me a copy, in his beautifully neat writing, of ' Crossing the Bar.' I had not yet seen the piece ; indeed, it was only just out and very little known, and I have ever since connected it with the giver, and shall always treasure it for the sake of his kind thought, and because it seems to me such a picture of his own trustful spirit and beautiful end.

" I do not know whether anyone ever saw him worried or pre-occupied or taken up with his own concerns ; I never did. To me he will ever be the embodiment of *cheerful trust* and a readiness to spend and be spent for others."

In November, 1894, we find Isaac Sharp at home again. One evening he writes in his diary : " For some days I have been considerably indisposed, on two days seriously so. Deafness largely increased, partial giddiness, difficult to get warm, physical and mental alike involved, a degree of

prostration like that of influenza. . . . Syria has been much before me, but I am graciously enabled to leave the future to the Lord with quiet trust."

The little circle at Ettington had been pleasantly enlarged by the addition of a married niece and her husband, Benjamin and Rebecca Gooch, and there are frequent allusions in the journal to happy, social intercourse and religious blending.

In the beginning of 1895, Isaac Sharp was so ill with a bronchial cold as to need medical care and trained nursing.

On New Year's Day he writes: "'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me; bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; bless the Lord.' At early morning these words were much before me. I concluded about 8 a.m. to send a telegram to Dr. Nason, of Stratford-on-Avon, whom I much value as a personal friend, as well as an able physician."

Eleven days later he says: "A very gracious assurance came over my mind that *the end is not yet*. Palestine came freshly before me. I felt that my little labour of love for my Master was not yet fully accomplished."

On the 6th of February he remarks: "Fifty-six years to-day have elapsed since my marriage, fifty-six years of wonderful mercy and of pardoning love."

When speaking in a meeting on our Lord's words, "Say to *My brethren*," etc., Isaac Sharp alluded to His calling them "brethren" though He was over all, and also to His words, "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father in Heaven, the same is My mother and sister and brother," words, as he remarked, "so simple yet so *intensely real*."

But there were hours in his spiritual life which enabled him to understand "the trial of our faith."

One day he writes: "I have thought a good deal of George Fox and his experience in the Vale of Beavor when a cloud of temptation came over him, but he was helped of the Lord to overcome and to triumph over Satan and his power. Life and light rose in dominion, and he was glad.

As to the exercise through which I have been passing, there came over my mind to-day with some comfort and assurance the words, 'It is the chastening thou needest, My son, so be patient under it.'"

Isaac Sharp's interest in the Moravian Missions was never crowded out by other kindred interests. When nearly ninety he went to Kew to attend a summer gathering of the "Old Neuwieders" and Moravian Missionaries, and he was cordially welcomed by all. A Friend who was present well remembers his earnest endeavours that day to impress on a younger Bruder the dangers of excessive smoking. This Friend says: "The dear old pilgrim was a pretty frequent visitor amongst us, always gladly welcomed by old and young, bringing with him an atmosphere of Christian cheerfulness, the remembrance of which is not likely to pass away. We all regarded him as a very dear and honoured friend, and after his visits we always felt we had had a lift forward on the road heavenward. His implicit and childlike faith and trust in his Divine Master was most instructive. . . . May his mantle rest on other shoulders. . . . It has been my privilege to be his companion at gatherings of City missionaries and I have reason to know how greatly these men valued what he said to them. Amongst other things some of them were deeply impressed with a favourite expression of his that 'He who would mark a Providence will never want a Providence to mark.'"

Even in his quiet days at Ettington the days hardly seemed long enough for all that Isaac Sharp would fain accomplish; thus we find in his diary such entries as the following: "Many urgently pressing claims of correspondence and divers other matters pursue me closely."

CHAPTER XIX.

“ Shall not the inner vision see
More than to outward eye may seem
Upon thy shores, O Galilee,
Or, Jordan, by thy winding stream ?
The mighty rivers of the West
No tale like thine have seaward borne
Since stooped beneath thy limpid crest
The Head thereafter crowned with thorn.
No other sea the wide earth through
E'er throbb'd beneath the Master's tread,
No other winds that ever blew
Bore on their wings the words He said.”

Jane Budge.

ISAAC SHARP sailed for Syria on the 27th of September, 1895, accompanied by his friend Dr. Dixon. During the voyage the two Friends had Bible readings together every morning, in which several others joined, and which were felt to be times of refreshing communion with each other and with the Lord. One Sunday, October 13th, was spent at Port Said, where the Friends had a meeting for worship in the hotel, when God's presence was felt to be very near. In the evening they attended two other meetings, one in the Bible House and one held for sailors, and on all three occasions Isaac Sharp was acceptably engaged. It need not be said that a warm welcome awaited him at the Friends' Mission Station at Brumana. One lady, Ellen Clayton, writes thus from their Hospital :

“ When I heard him in London and also during his visit here on Mount Lebanon the peaceful expression of his face

seemed a little sermon to us. There were many hindrances and delays before his visit to Syria was accomplished, but I was struck with the fitness of the time, and his being accompanied by Dr. Dixon made the visit peculiarly acceptable. We were in great trouble on account of the very serious illness of a clergyman of the Church Missionary Society at the hotel close by, as well as of one of our own workers, Lotfallah Riskallah, during the absence of Dr. Beshara in England. Dr. Dixon came out with Isaac Sharp to find the clergyman dying and Lotfallah so ill that he also passed away during the following week. You can understand the comfort and help it was to have these two dear Friends entering into our grief and helping both with spiritual sympathy and medical knowledge, so that our doctor, as well as myself, felt that our God had sent them in that particular time, proving that 'Man's extremity is God's opportunity.' The widow of the clergyman just referred to is a very sweet young woman. She is working now for the Church Missionary Society in Jerusalem, and when I wrote to tell her of Isaac Sharp's death she replied that it reminded her at once of the first time she saw him in our little meeting-house (at her husband's funeral) and heard him say: 'The gift of God is eternal life,' adding, 'our friend is not dead, for God had given him eternal life and he had accepted it long before,—how quickly and yet how quietly the Master seems to be gathering His dear ones home, and it will not be long for any one of us.'

"The few original lines which Isaac Sharp wrote in our visitors' book in the Hospital are perhaps familiar to you :

' As the tide with ebb and flow,
Even so
Days of mercy come and go.' "

There was a third grave and that a little one, beside which Isaac Sharp stood and ministered to sorrowing hearts of the comfort wherewith he himself was comforted of God, for the fair-haired, sweet little daughter of the

German Consul died of diphtheria, and was laid in the Friends' graveyard, the German pastor conducting a Lutheran funeral service. After the singing of a hymn, Isaac Sharp stepped forward, and said a few words about the little lamp whose light had so soon gone out, and spoke of the love of the Lord Jesus for the children whom He would have suffered to come to Him. Directly after the company began to disperse, the bereaved father came over to Isaac Sharp and warmly thanked him for his comforting and sympathetic words.

His age and health considered, the amount of work which he accomplished in his Syrian visit was wonderful. He not only attended meetings for worship, but went to gatherings of different kinds, including schools and mothers' meetings. At one of the former he suggested giving the children a treat; tea, sweets and cakes, a sure and pleasant way of causing his words to be remembered. When the simple feast was finished, he spoke to them for nearly two hours, telling them about his travels, their attention being riveted all the time, and when he had ended, they begged him to come again.

It was decided to visit Ras el Metn, three miles from Brumana, but only to be reached by a very steep and difficult road, over which willing hands carried Isaac Sharp in a hammock. He spent a Sunday at this village, and attended the mission meeting, where about two hundred persons were present, including many Druses and Greek Catholics, and two Turkish soldiers, to whom he spoke solemnly of the love of God which had provided a remedy for a sin-stricken world. In the afternoon he visited and addressed the Sunday schools, and he also attended the evening service and received several visitors. Truly this was not a light day's work for one of his age. The next day, after going to the schools, a call was paid by appointment on the chief Druse, a handsome, imposing looking old man of eighty. The Friends met with a most cordial welcome from him, his sons, grandsons, and neighbours,

who filled the large audience room, and refreshments of fruit, coffee, and orangeade were presented to the guests.

When the Friends started on the next day to return to Brumana, there was quite an assemblage of Druses and Greeks to see them off, and many of the young Druses were eager to have the privilege of carrying Isaac Sharp through the village. On the outskirts, the school children were waiting to say good-bye, the boys on one side with myrtle branches in one hand and a hymn-book in the other, while the girls who stood on the opposite side began to sing, "Whither, pilgrim, are you going?" At the bottom of the valley there was a gathering of the boys from the Training Home, and the whole party had a picnic lunch together amidst the grand mountain scenery.

The 1st of December was Isaac Sharp's last Sunday in Brumana, and he gave his last message to those assembled there for worship from the words, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life."

The next morning, after breakfast, he expressed his loving appreciation of the great kindness he had received from Theophilus Waldmeier and his family, and then addressed them about the claims of Christ on each one of them in terms likely to be long remembered.

A copy of the following minute of the Brumana Monthly Meeting was afterwards forwarded to England by Dr. Beshara :

"The members of the Monthly Meeting thankfully acknowledge the warmth and Christian earnestness which still fires the heart of our beloved aged friend, Isaac Sharp. Since his feet touched the ground of these goodly mountains he was fully engaged in looking after the needs of the precious souls in this place, meeting with them as individuals and as a congregation, and we believe his meetings were abundantly blessed. We thank God for keeping his life so long that he was able to fulfil his message to us. He felt especially sent in a needful time to share with us in the

great sorrow we have had in the past two months. Trusting the Lord will bless and water the seed sown in this country to the glory of Jesus Christ our Lord,

BESHARA J. MANASSEH."

Soon the travellers were again at Jaffa, with their faces set towards Jerusalem. It needs not to be told how deeply Isaac Sharp felt the privilege and responsibility of preaching the Gospel in the Holy Land, where its message first was heard; but while it was a perpetual joy to him to know, as he came and went, that he was passing to and fro where his Lord had gone before him, yet was his heart so full of his mission to the living witnesses for Christ, that he forbore to visit places of most sacred interest, where the delay might interfere with his work. He journeyed to Ramallah in a palanquin between two long shafts, with one mule in front and one behind, carrying him safely over a most stony, rocky road. He was warmly welcomed by the Friends at their Mission Station, and on Sunday, the 8th of December, attended the meeting for worship, where 155, including children, were present. After ministering here in the morning, he addressed the Sunday School in the afternoon, having an audience of 110, and had a very interesting time. The day's service was completed by giving an account of his travels, and speaking on the 19th Psalm, about prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. His mission led him to Bethany, reached by a path so rocky that it has been said that there, more than anywhere else on earth, the wayfarer may almost literally tread in the Saviour's footsteps, so little change could be wrought by time on the adamant road. He also paid a greatly valued visit to the Mildmay Mission at Hebron, in a storm of wind and rain, and afterwards called on a couple of independent workers, husband and wife, the former lame on both feet, the latter quite blind, and *because* of their defenceless condition received by the Moslems in a wonderful way, which would not, perhaps, have been the case in some more enlightened communities.

These good people were most grateful for the prayer and sympathy of their unlooked-for guest, cheering them in their lonely lot. Isaac Sharp went to Hebron a second time to visit, at the Church Missionary School, the widow of the clergyman who had died at Brumana, and to encourage and sympathize with her and her fellow-workers. On neither occasion was there leisure to explore a single one of the scenes of interest with which Hebron abounds, but he was able to see some places of far more thrilling memories in the Holy City itself.

He finally left Jerusalem on December 14th, 1895, and reached London on the 22nd of the same month, a little tired, but in as good health as when he started on his long journey, except for a slight cold. Several times when travelling home, and especially when within a few minutes of his arrival, he said how devoutly thankful and full of praise he was to his Heavenly Father, who had fulfilled His promise, and enabled him to complete the service to which he had been called. He said that he felt very deeply how imperfectly the service had been done, but God was a kind and tender Master, and did not expect more from His servants than they could do and give.

"I could not but heartily rejoice with him," writes Dr. Dixon, "knowing so well his physical condition. Other people, under similar conditions, would have been receiving great care, nursing, and home comforts. It did seem to me like a miracle, his coming home again in preserved health, without any serious illness, during the three months' journey. Is it not so that—

‘ They that trust Him wholly
Find Him wholly true ’ ?

So he came back to dwell again in his peaceful and rustic home, surrounded by kind relatives and friends, and to be taken home from Ettington rather than from among strangers in a foreign land.”*

* Nearly all the particulars of Isaac Sharp's visit to Syria have been taken from notes furnished by Dr. Dixon.

CHAPTER XX.*

“ O, happy, happy day
That calls Thy exiles home.”

Wesley.

“ I go to life and not to death,
From darkness to light’s native sky ;
I go from sickness and from pain
To health and immortality.
Let our farewell then be tearless,
Since I bid farewell to tears ;
Write the day of my departure
Festive in your coming years.”

Horatius Bonar.

THE year 1896 opened on Isaac Sharp in the peace and quiet of his home. He seemed like a mariner returning from a distant and adventurous voyage, who sees before him the destined haven, with nothing but a calm expanse of waveless sea between. It was hoped, and it appeared not improbable, that he might yet be spared for some years to enjoy his rest after labour, and cheer with his refreshing presence relatives and friends nearer home. He set himself deliberately to put his affairs in order, and clear off arrears of work which, through long absence, had accumulated. His extensive correspondence occupied much of his time, and it was his delight to hold epistolary intercourse with kindred spirits far and near. His reading was very varied; his interests were wide and tolerant. He was wishful to

* The particulars in this chapter are taken almost verbatim from the account written by Benjamin Gooch.

keep himself acquainted with the passing events of the day, the Armenian and Cretan questions, the discoveries of science, and geographical research having special attractions for him. Nothing of human interest was outside his sympathy, or regarded with indifference. Though painfully conscious of sin and suffering around him, life was still very beautiful to him, and God's earth very bright. Reports of missions and periodicals of the Society of Friends were constantly on his table, for the prosperity of the cause for which he lived and laboured was ever near to his heart. This interest in the affairs of others, temporal as well as spiritual, was always ready and keen. He would listen patiently to a recital of troubles and perplexities, which he was quick to recall and inquire about long after they might have escaped the memory of much younger men. Even on his death-bed and in the midst of suffering this characteristic trait survived. His mind was ever active and his sympathy ever fresh, in spite of the burden of ninety years and some of those pains and penalties of old age which make other men selfish and self-centred. Occasionally he visited Monthly or Quarterly Meetings, near or more remote, and sometimes went up to town to attend meetings or pay visits.

Sometimes, when invited, he would give a short address to village audiences on the subject of Peace, or experiences drawn from his world-wide travels, and one such address, given at a Bible Society meeting about a year before his death, made a remarkable impression upon his audience, and is still spoken of with emphatic approval.

In the little meeting-house, where a very small company of Friends assembled for worship, his voice was constantly heard in ministry or prayer when he was present, sometimes with great power and directness, always to comfort or edification. Strangers who dropped in were occasionally much impressed.

During the summer he was troubled with failing eyesight, and his heart showed signs of weakness; yet, in the

Memorandum

Americans scores to-day
her 120th year of Independence
her well remembered 4th
of July, and on this same
day, the dial of time bears
record of 90 from the day
of my birth - For mercies
past & present

& Praise the Lord

Isaac Sharp

7th 4th 1896

month of August, he went with his brother Thomson for their annual excursion on their native Sussex Downs, and he was able to write home that he could still ascend on foot a hill three hundred feet high, without fatigue or inconvenience.

So, peacefully and pleasantly his declining days passed by, not unfrequently shadowed, however, by tidings of the decease of absent friends long known and valued. And especially did this peculiar trial of the aged come home to him in the last year of his life. In the month of June occurred the sudden death of his kind and endeared friend Margaret Gibbins ; soon after he was called upon to mourn the departure of a beloved niece and two nephews in rapid succession ; and as he lay upon what proved to be his own death-bed, he felt called upon to write with his own failing hand a letter of sympathy and condolence to the son of an old friend and former fellow-townsmen. In times of bereavement, beside the open grave or by the hearth whence a household name had vanished, his presence always brought a cheer and a support ; for his tender sympathy, his power in prayer, and his victorious faith rendered him peculiarly fitted to impart hope to the dying or consolation to the living.

On the 27th of December, 1896, his voice was heard in Ettington meeting-house for the last time. He had arranged to deliver a lecture on "Incidents of Travel," at Devonshire House, on the evening of the ensuing day. The medical adviser cautioned him not to leave home in such an inclement season ; but when it was suggested to him to defer his lecture at the last moment, rather than run any risk, he retorted with vivacity, "Of course I shall go ; it would never do to disappoint so many people." On the morning of the day he travelled up to town he seemed unusually well ; and the writer who saw him depart from the Ettington railway station has a lively recollection of the amused expression on the stationmaster's countenance as he passed on the platform, and heard him narrating one of his

facetious anecdotes in his inimitable style. At the lecture in the evening he spoke with vigour for an hour to a large audience, and seemed none the worse for his exertion. Afterwards he remained some days in town, attending meetings and paying visits. It was his intention to stay over the ensuing session of the Meeting for Sufferings on January 8th, 1897; but he had contracted a severe cold, and found it expedient to return home on the day of the meeting without waiting for it. As he rode up from the Ettington station to his lodgings, he remarked that he had not returned a day too soon. On reaching his home he seemed thankful to regain its shelter. He never left it again till he left it for "the house not made with hands."

At first it was thought he was merely suffering from a cold, which rest and careful nursing would subdue; and when it became evident that the action of the liver was irregular, it was supposed to be nothing more than the effect of a chill. His medical adviser, Dr. J. J. Nason of Stratford-on-Avon, did not at first take a serious view of his case; but, as time passed, he recognised that the organ in question was more seriously affected, and jaundice was impending. The depressing character of his malady subdued his cheerful and buoyant spirit; yet he would never admit that he was "depressed." Depression meant, to him, the loss of hope and confidence. "No, dear!" he would say, "not depressed,—oppressed," if one suggested that he was depressed. Oppressed he often was by physical infirmity; but his spiritual horizon was clear and unclouded. And, through all, his mental activity and indomitable spirit of work still continued.

His bed during the forenoon was frequently littered with letters and periodicals; and, with a pillow and a small tablet of wood ingeniously extemporised as a desk, he would sit propped up in bed, writing letters and making memoranda till fatigue obliged him to give over. Before long, however, he was compelled to discontinue most of his correspondence, and to employ the pen of

another to set down his thoughts. He generally had the summary of news in the daily papers, and the table of contents in periodicals read over to him ; when, in his usual prompt and decided way, he indicated the articles he wished to hear read. In the correspondence columns of *The Friend* of First-month 21st was a letter with the heading, "Friends in Fair Isle, N.B." The name attracted him, and the article was read at his request. It referred to the visit of two ministers of the Society of Friends to that remote northern isle many years ago, and told of the life-long blessing which had resulted to an individual from attending the meeting which they held there. He was much impressed by the reading, and afterwards told the reader that Barnard Dickinson and himself were the two ministers in question. He related how, in the year 1846, under a strong sense of duty, they had undergone much fatigue and discomfort to reach that then almost inaccessible place ; and he recognised the text and purport of his colleague's address. After fifty years he was to learn, on his death-bed, one result of that journey ; to him it was as bread cast upon the waters and found after many days.

By the aid of medical treatment and careful nursing, he was so far restored on the 8th of February as to be able to come downstairs again ; and on the 11th the trained nurse left, after three weeks' attendance. He wrote thus at this time : "I am slowly but hopefully gaining strength. Ability for writing still small. . . . I was brought low, and the Lord helped me. Lo ! the end is not yet. May all be to His praise."

The recovery of Isaac Sharp was partial and illusive. On the 12th of February, the very day after the nurse left, as he sat writing a letter to his daughter, in the forenoon, he was seized with violent internal pain, accompanied by severe rigour, which compelled him to take to his bed again, and after a few days a trained nurse was again procured from the Stratford Nursing Home. With such help as was at hand from his housekeeper and others,

Nurse Blake was able to meet all his requirements till near the close, when a second nurse became necessary. She afterwards spoke of the pleasant hours passed in his sick chamber before he became too ill for conversation. He frequently entertained her with anecdotes and personal reminiscences ; and at the conclusion of a narration would say, " Now tell me some of thy hospital experiences." He was a good listener as well as a good talker ; he could never be merely garrulous or egotistic. His housekeeper and the nurse usually met in his room for family worship ; when, after the reading of the Bible, he frequently addressed a few words to them, and engaged in prayer.

On two consecutive days, the 2nd and 3rd of March, the attacks were renewed, and though much more brief in duration than hitherto, they were more exhausting from occurring so close together. Further medical advice was now deemed necessary ; and Sir Willoughby Wades of Birmingham, met Dr. Nason for consultation.

About this time Isaac Sharp gave the first indication that he deemed the issue of the disease doubtful. The day before the medical consultation, he dictated a letter to his valued friend J. B. Braithwaite, which seemed like a valedictory message to him and the other members of the committee who had been charged to correspond and advise with him during his years of missionary service and travel. One of the chief pleasures of his life, and one to which he was wont to look forward with joyous anticipation, was his attendance at the Durham Quarterly Meeting held at Darlington in April, with its accompanying visits to relatives and friends in the north of England. In the early days of his illness he avowed his belief that he should be raised up again in time to undertake the journey ; but subsequently he was led to feel that this prospect, and all other pleasant pictures, must be surrendered, if needful, in obedience to the Divine will. In the letter just mentioned he expressed himself to this effect : " The Lord has been leading me into a deep experience. I had

been looking for an early return to life and labour. It pleased Him to lead me spiritually into the shadowy vale ; but, in wonderful love, He did not leave me there alone. . . . In infinite love, it was clearly shown to me that a full surrender must be made, with a willingness to resign all, and to accept all which He might be graciously pleased to appoint for trial or for triumph, for sickness or for health, for suffering or for service, for life or for death. . . . I was enabled, by His grace, in full surrender to say, ' Lord, not my will, but Thine be done ! ' Then came a glow of sweet peace, and the Lord had the praise. . . . Now, in the midst of that valley, I was enabled to look up. There was no darkness in it, but the deep clouds parted, revealing the azure blue beyond ; and with this came a sense of the infinite love and compassion of our Father." But, even after this expression of his feeling, Isaac Sharp, occasionally, as his condition varied for the better, still cherished the expectation of a return to life and labour.

On the 10th there could no longer be any doubt as to the final issue of his illness ; but that marvellous vitality which had so signally overcome the effects of hardship and suffering in the past still maintained a conflict in the grasp of death, and the lamp of life continued to flicker to the last. In the afternoon of that day, when the extremity of pain had subsided, the patient sufferer expressed his thankfulness for partial relief ; and, addressing one who sat beside his bed, he said, " I want to say that in my suffering I cast myself upon the Lord. I do not wish to undervalue the kind and unremitting attention I have received ; but I wish it to be understood that relief came distinctly in answer to prayer. The means used were blessed."

The last and most suffering stage of his illness here commenced ; yet still, as ever, he continued to evince the same gentle consideration for those who ministered to him. He was grateful for every service, and continually on the

watch lest patience should fail him. "I hope my dear nurse does not think me impatient," he would say apologetically, if he seemed too eagerly to hasten her in the application of relief. Or he would suggest that it was time for his attendants to retire for a meal, or for the night's rest. Or, again, he would urge them to take an opportunity which offered for much-needed air and exercise out of doors. One of his last acts, about this period, before he became too ill to attend to such matters, was to bestow some tokens of his gratitude upon those who ministered to his relief.*

Very touching, too, were the indications of his affection for his relatives at this time. The clinging human love, the heart-hunger for human sympathy in his distress, were still present with him, even while his soul found refuge and strength in reliance on the Everlasting Arm. To one he said, with a warm pressure of the hand, "I know I have thy love and sympathy"; of another, "Her loving sympathy is very helpful to me"; and, when speech had almost failed, he whispered to his brother, "The voice is gone, but the love remains." Sometimes, when utterance was difficult, if one of "his dear ones" (as he called them) entered the room, or if their names were mentioned, he would look upward and lift his hands, as though invoking a blessing.

In the midst of accumulated suffering his chief anxiety seemed to be lest his patience and resignation should not hold out. Once, during a night of peculiar unrest, he was heard to ejaculate hurriedly, "Oh, come; come quickly!" But immediately after, in a loud, strong voice, he broke forth, "Not my will, dear Lord, but Thine be done." In the morning he remarked to the nurse in attendance that he had never expected to live through the night; but when she inquired, "And how do you feel now, Mr. Sharp?" he replied, with a twinkle of his old mirthfulness, "More like

* One of the nurses said, "It was like waiting on an angel."

life than death." Then, immediately raising his hands, he added reverently, "As He wills!" After another troubled night, when his doctor suggested that the longed-for release was at hand, he meekly returned, "In His own good time; blessed be His holy name!"

In the afternoon of the 15th he asked Nurse Blake, "Will my voice hold out through the night?" When she expressed a doubt, he intimated his belief that the end was near. "But you have dear ones awaiting you on the other side," she said. "Oh, yes!" he answered, "my wife and others." "I am sure there is peace." "Oh, yes! Christ has died that we might live." Then, addressing his nephew and niece, he continued: "This is my death-bed testimony. I have a living sense that it is best to live in the love and power of God, that we may be complete in Him, in whom alone we can be complete. Blessed be His holy name! To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Death is swallowed up in victory." After delivering an affectionate message for his aged and invalid sister-in-law, he resumed: "May the true life be the blessed portion of us all, now and for evermore. Press for the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." This was his last day of acute suffering. He had said during the course of the day, "I shall be at rest to-morrow." Rest, or at least comparative rest, did come on the morrow, but not in the form anticipated. He lingered for six days longer, slowly dying, his only sustenance being hot water.

Between Isaac Sharp and Dr. Nason a bond of friendship and religious sympathy had for years existed. When the doctor stood beside his bed on the morning of the 19th, the patient greeted him with a smile, and for some time ineffectually tried to speak. At length, with much effort, he said, "I am going home"; and then, "Heavenly home." The doctor added, "Our Father's home." The dying man looked steadfastly in his physician's face, as if to be sure he was observing him; then he raised his eyes, and slowly waved his right hand above his head, while a smile of

wonderful triumph transfigured for a moment the worn, weary face. Four times in succession, with a pause between, this expressive action was repeated, and the fourth time the bystanders caught the whisper, "Glory ! glory ! glory !"

On the morning of the 21st his relatives and friends were hastily summoned to his bedside. The scene was one which those present will not soon forget. Without, the quiet of the Sabbath morning was resting upon earth and sky ; the birds, which the kindly old man had so lately loved to watch in the ivy-covered trees opposite his windows, were singing gaily in the sunshine ; the soft breath of spring came in at the open casement. Within, eight silent watchers were waiting in reverent stillness, listening to the short but regular breathing of the dying, and momentarily expecting it to cease. An atmosphere of solemn peace pervaded the low-roofed chamber. So the hours went by ; until about half-an-hour past noon, just as the subdued sound of voices and footsteps of the villagers returning from service at the little church on the hill close by were heard beneath the window, slowly and quietly the end came. For him earth's Sabbaths were over ; he had entered on the eternal Sabbath above.

Five days later, in the ancient burial-ground at Ettington, overshadowed by the great Warwickshire elms, opposite the entrance of the little meeting-house where his voice had so often been heard in prayer and exhortation, and whose grey, ivy-covered walls date their erection back to the days of the founders of the religious community to which he loved to belong, were committed to the earth, in appropriate resting-place, the mortal remains of that patriarchal minister, who in life had so fittingly combined the solemn reverence, the pietism, and the simplicity of the older Quakerism with the wider sympathies and activities of the new. From far and near, friends and neighbours gathered round to pay the last tribute of respect, and solemn testimonies were borne by Jonathan



ETTINGTON MEETING HOUSE.

E. W. W. W. W. W.

Backhouse Hodgkin, Arthur Pease, M.P., William C. Braithwaite, and others to the worth and service of the departed, and to the power of that divine grace which had guided and sustained him through a long earthly pilgrimage, and had not forsaken him at its close.

“ Ever the richest, tenderest glow
Sets round th’ autumnal sun—
But there sight fails ; no heart may know
The bliss when life is done.”

Keble.

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INDEX.

- Aberbeen, 152.
 Adelaide, 132.
 Africa, South, visited, 79-118;
 climatic experiences, 89;
 mode of travel, 94-96.
 Alexander, Samuel, accom-
 panies Isaac Sharp, 267, 268,
 269.
 Allen, William, visits Norway,
 24.
 Ambohimatra, 123.
 Ambohitantaley, 126.
 Analakeley, 122.
 Anderson, Dr., 167, 170, 172.
 Anderson, Samuel, 170.
 Antananarivo, arrival at, 120,
 121.
 Appleton, Dr. Henry, accom-
 panies Isaac Sharp, 183, 188.
 Archdale, John, Governor of
 Carolinas, and first Friend
 M.P., 15.
 Archibald, John, 236.
 Arnott, Captain, 221.
 Auld Willy, 223.
 Australasia, 130-135.
 Ayton School, 15, 64.

 Backhouse, James, 116, 144.
 Backhouse, Katherine, 247.
 Baedeker, Dr., 186.
 Baker, Joseph Allen, 259.
 Baker, Samuel and Anna, 194.
 Balclutha, 133.
 Baltimore Yearly Meeting, 137,
 252.
 Bamangwati, 104.
 Bara, 123.
 Baron, Mr., 123.
 Basuto Land, Terrific thunder-
 storm in, 6, 113, 117.

 Bean, Joel, Account of travel
 with Isaac Sharp, 137, 140,
 162, 183, 207, 243.
 Bean, Joel, Testimony respect-
 ing Isaac Sharp, 23.
 Bean, Hannah, 183.
 Beauchamp, Mr. and Mrs.,
 217, 218.
 Beck, Samuel, 252.
 Beckwith, Esther, 266.
 Bedford Institute, 163.
 Bellot, Lieutenant, 175.
 Berea, 114.
 Bergen, 27.
 Bernard, Marie, 267.
 Berryessa, 205, 256.
 Bethelsdorp, 85.
 Bew, Mr., 111.
 Beyrout, 127.
 Bhopal, 193.
 Blake, Nurse, 284, 287.
 Bloemfontein, 112.
 Bluff, The, 134.
 Bombay, 192.
 Boshof, Mr., 108.
 Bourne, Matthew, 9; his mill
 and horse, 10.
 Braithwaite, George, 199, 201,
 202, 216.
 Braithwaite, Joseph Bevan, 92,
 170, 176, 184, 262.
 Braithwaite, Joseph Bevan,
 Testimony respecting Isaac
 Sharp, 62.
 Braithwaite, Martha, 145, 199,
 201.
 Braithwaite, William C., 146,
 289.
 Brandy flask, Story of, 8.
 Brewin, William, 197.
 Bright, John, 220.

- Brighton, 9, 10, 220.
 Brink, Mr. and Mrs., 100.
 Brisbane, 132.
 British and Foreign Bible Society, 6; Isaac Sharp an agent of, 29, 184, 280, 284.
 Broadstairs, 70, 146, 147, 152, 183.
 Brockway, Mr., 124.
 Brown, Dr., 206.
 Brown, Isaac, 118, 184.
 Brown, Morris, 138.
 Brumana, 273, 276.
 Bryne, Thorstein, 261.
 Budge, John, visits Norway with Isaac Sharp, 24, 26, 27, 262.
 Burness, Mr. and family murdered, 91.

 Cachet, F. L., 83.
 Calcutta, 192, 196.
 Caledon River, 113.
 Canada Yearly Meeting, 247.
 Cannibalism, 7.
 Cape Town, 81.
 Casalis, Dr., 113; his wife and child struck with lightning, 114.
 Chicago, 139, 245, 246.
 China, prospect of visit to, 197, 199, 204, 207, 209, 213, 215; reached 217; Chung King reached 224; left 239.
 China Inland Mission, 218, 219, 225.
 Chingtan Rapid, 232.
 Chung King, 214, 215, 217, 221, 223; reached 224; described, etc., 225, 228, 234, 237, 242.
 Cincinnati, 139.
 Clark, Henry E., 122, 124, 125, 126, 129.
 Clayton, Ellen, 273.
 Clemes, Samuel, 121.
 Clevedon, 270.
 Cleveland, discovery of iron ore, 28.

 Coffin, Charles, writes of Isaac Sharp, 139.
 Coggeshall Abbey, 11.
 College Park, 243.
 Come-to-good, 150.
 Congénies, 267.
 Constantinople, 183, 186.
 Cornaby, William A., 239.
 Creek Orchard, 205, 211, 214.
 Croydon Scholar's reference to Isaac Sharp, 75.

 Dahl, Endre, 141.
 Dairy Knoll, Isaac Sharp's Middlesbrough home, 70.
 Dalencourt, Justine, 175, 268.
 Daniel's Knil, 91, 92.
 Darlington, 15, 284.
 Darlington Monthly Meeting, 22, 164.
 Davenport, Dr., 230.
 Davidson, Robert and M. J., 225, 227, 229, 231, 244.
 Davy, J. Burt, 241.
 Day and Robson, 13, 133, 257.
 Deane, Frederick S., 221, 223, 224.
 Denmark, visited, 78.
 Dickenson, Barnard, visits Orkney and Shetland Isles, 28; visit to Fair Isle, 71, 283.
 Dixon, Dr., accompanies Isaac Sharp, 188, 191, 192, 193, 196, 200, 204; returns home, 205; accompanies Isaac Sharp to Syria, 273, 274, 278.
 Dobrashian, Dr., 186, 187, 188, 190.
 Dobrashian, G. M., 186, 189.
 Dobrashian, Sukias, 186, 189.
 Doeg, Robert, Service in Denmark, etc., 78.
 Dorland, John T., 160, 245, 264.
 Drapers, 146.
 Dulwich, 266.
 Dunning, John, 70, 76, 77, 145, 147.

- Dunning, Priscilla, 9, 70, 77, 144, 145, 146, 147, 149, 152, 153, 183.
 Durban, 119.
 Durham Quarterly Meeting, 22, 264, 284.
 Dyke, Mrs., 113.
 Earls Colne School, 11.
 Enon, 85.
 Eriksen, Helge, 27.
 Escaudon, 256.
 Esquimaux, visits to, 58-60.
 Ettington, 154, 161, 162, 176, 178, 262, 264, 271, 272, 278, 281, 282, 288.
 Evans, Edward, 218, 238.
 Evens, Anna L., 194.
 Fair Isle, visited, 71, 283.
 Farne Isles, visited, 36; difficulties of travel, 37; kindly reception, 40.
 Flekkefiord, 262.
 Florida, 253.
 Fogg, Archdeacon, 85.
 Fontanès, 267.
 Forster, Josiah, 29.
 Forster, William, 259.
 Foster, Arnold, 219, 220; account of Isaac Sharp's visit to China, 234.
 Fothergill, John, 136.
 Fox, Anna Maria, 63.
 Fox, George, 67, 103, 112, 130, 181, 245, 271.
 France, visited, 167, 267.
 Frank, 211.
 French Hook Pass, 83.
 Frere, Sir Bartle and Lady, 82.
 Friedericksthal, 52, 54.
 Friends' Foreign Mission Association, 127, 192, 218, 226.
 Friends, Society of, mode of "liberating" Ministers for service, 23.
 Friendsville, 139.
 Gardiner, Peter, 199.
 Genadendal, 84.
 Gibbins, Sarah, 155, 243.
 Gibbins, Margaret, 281.
 Giberne, Agnes, on heathenism, 108.
 Giddy, Mr., 115.
 Gillett, Charles, 186.
 Gillett, George, decease of, 253.
 Gilpin, Helen, 121.
 Giragoshian, Dr., 187, 188, 189.
 Glaisyer, Sarah, 10.
 Griqua Land, 110.
 Goddard, Charles W., 252.
 Good, Mr. and Mrs., 96, 97, 98.
 Goouch, Benjamin and R., 271, 278.
 Graaf Reinnet, 87; Bible Association, 88.
 Gray, Mr., 133.
 Green, Henrietta, 221.
 Green, Joshua, 16, 257.
 Greenland, visited, 46; the voyage, 47; arrival, 48; first meeting there, 49; various visits, 49-56.
 Grellet, Stephen, visits Norway, 24.
 Grimsey Island, visited, 30.
 Gudbrand, Bishop, prints first Icelandic Bible, 30.
 Gundry, M. A., 200, 201, 202.
 Hagenauer, 130.
 Hammerfest, 67.
 Hanbury, Elizabeth, 263.
 Hankow, 218, 219, 220, 234.
 Hansen, Paul, 47, 49.
 Harda, 195.
Harmony, the Moravian Mission ship, 56, 60, 75.
 Harris, Theodore, accompanies Isaac Sharp to South Africa, 79, 80, 84, 85; returns home, 86.
 Hebron, 277.
 Hecla, Mount, 32.
 Hepburn, Mr. and Mrs., 102, 104, 106.
 Herbrick, C. G., 49, 50.

- Hipsley, Henry, 197.
 Hobart Town, 131, 134.
 Hodgkin, Dr. Thomas, 264.
 Hodgkin, Violet, 176.
 Hodgkin, Jonathan Backhouse,
 182, 186, 242, 288.
 Holar, 30.
 Hookey, Mr., leaves Motito, 4.
 Hoshangabad, 194.
 Houston, 255.
 Hoyle, Phebe, 140.
 Hutchinson, Dr., 166.

 Iceland visited, 28; reception
 of Isaac Sharp by Lutheran
 Bishop, 29; meeting with
 members of Icelandic Parlia-
 ment, 30; mode of travel, 32;
 address from leading men,
 33; opening of a church, 34;
 a land of negatives, 35;
 again visited, 40; Icelandic
 hospitality, 40; encounter
 with man mad with drink,
 41; Icelandic curiosity, 42;
 passage of Yokulsa, 44;
 meeting with College tea-
 chers, 45.
 Ichang, 217, 219, 221, 231, 233,
 235.
 Ilkley, 145.
 Impey, Robert, 11.
 Impey, William, schoolmaster,
 11.
 India visited, 192-7.
 Indiana Yearly Meeting, 251.
 Invercargill, 132.

 Jackson, Elizabeth, 194.
 Jackson, Thomas and Ann F.,
 134.
 Jaffa, 277.
 Jalaguier, Dr., 167.
 Japan visited, 199.
 Jay, Allen, service in Denmark,
 etc., 78.
 Jeffrey, Russell, 197.
 Jerusalem, 277, 278.

 John, Dr. Griffith, 218, 219,
 220, 229, 230, 233, 236.
 Johnson, William and Lucy,
 122, 124, 125, 264.
 Jones, Benjamin H., 258.
 Jones, Bishop, 82.
 Jones, William, testimony
 respecting Isaac Sharp, 76.
 Jubilees of George III. and
 Victoria, 11.
 Jumerati, 194.

 Kansas Yearly Meeting, 251.
 Kanye, 96, 97, 98.
 Khama encourages Bible
 Society, 6, 104; forbids use
 of alcoholics, 105.
 Kick-a-Poo Mission, 252.
 Kimberley, 110, 112.
 King, Rufus, 78.
 Kitching, Langley, companion-
 ship of, 5, 79, 83, 85, 86, 87,
 89; kills a cobra, 90; 92, 98;
 account of thunderstorm, 113;
 114, 117; in Madagascar,
 124; returns to England, 128.
 Kloster Asbjorn accompanies
 Isaac Sharp to Iceland, 30,
 33, 34; also to Faroe Isles,
 36, 261.
 Kobe, 217.
 Koloberg, 98.
 Kopong, 102.
 Kung Billy, 7.
 Kuruman, 4, 90, 91, 92, 94.
 Kvinesdal, 261.

 Labrador visited, 56-61.
 Lamb, Charles, 245.
 Lanyon, Colonel, 110, 112.
 Leribe, 113, 114.
 Leuchive, 100.
 Lichtenfels, 50, 52.
 Likeman, Elizabeth, journal
 entries of, 11; account of,
 12.
 Likeman, Mary, 9.
 Linklater, Captain, reference
 to Isaac Sharp, 75.

- Linnoxana, 96.
 Livingstone, 96, 98.
 London Missionary Society,
 120, 124, 225, 236.
 Lotfallah, Riskallah, 274.
 Lyon, Mary, 80.

 Macdonald, Dr., 196, 215.
 Mackenzie, Mr., 4, 91, 92.
 Madagascar, 7; arrival in, 119,
 120; mode of travel, 121,
 123; vegetation, 124; slavery
 in, 125; address to Queen of,
 128.
 Magnusson, Professor, testi-
 mony respecting Isaac Sharp,
 75.
 Manasseh, Dr. Beshara, 277.
 Manderstrom, Baron, 28.
 Manuana, 96.
 Marion, 207.
 Maryville, 139.
 Mason, Isaac, 218, 223, 224,
 235, 266.
 Mason, Thomas and Jane, 134.
 Matehuala, 255.
 Mather, Robert A., 134.
 Matjes Fontein, 90.
 Mauritius, 119, 129.
 McAll Mission, 268.
 Methodist Episcopal Mission,
 225, 226.
 Melbourne, 130, 132, 134.
 Mexico, 8, 143, 145, 161, 168,
 253, 255.
 Michel, Louise, 269.
 Middlesbrough, site of town
 purchased, 15; iron trade,
 28.
 Miller, Dr., 242, 257.
 Minden, 78.
 Modoc Indians, 141, 252.
 Mody, M., 192.
 Moffat, Dr., advice of, 4;
 writes of the Murray family,
 87.
 Moffatt Institute, 4, 91.
 Moffat, J. S., 98, 99, 106.
 Moleopole, 98, 104, 106, 107.

 Molope, 95.
 Monterey, 255.
 Morija, 113, 114.
 Morris, Samuel, 210, 216.
 Moravian Missions, 46, 48, 56-
 61, 74, 75, 84, 130, 192, 272.
 Moscopototo, 92.
 Motito, 4, 92, 94.
 Motsodi, 99, 100.
 Müller, George, 160.
 Müller, Mr., 84.
 Murray, Andrew, visited by
 Isaac Sharp and com-
 panions, 79, 249.
 Murray, Charles, 87, 88.
 Murray family, welcome from,
 80, 85, 87.
 Murray, George, 85.

 Nason, Dr., 161, 171, 176, 264,
 271, 282, 284, 287.
 Neave, Joseph James, 130, 132;
 account of travel with Isaac
 Sharp, 133, 135.
 Neethling, Professor, 80, 83.
 New Bedford, 247.
 New England Yearly Meeting,
 246.
 New Garden, 140.
 New Herrnhut, 47, 48, 50.
 New York, 139.
 New Zealand, visited, 132.
 Newberg, 207.
 Newcastle, 264.
 Newman, Henry Stanley, 185.
 Niagara, 142.
 Nightingale, John, 221.
 Nîmes, 268.
 North Shields, 17.
 Norway visited, 24, 78, 261;
 settlement of Friends there,
 24-26; the King visited, 28;
 visited by James Owen, 75.

 Ohio Yearly Meeting, 248.
 Orkney and Shetland Isles
 visited, 28.
 Owen, James, visit to Norway,
 75.

- Pacific Grove, 210.
 Paris, 167.
 Pearse, Mark Guy, 146.
 Pearson, John, 203.
 Pease, Arthur, 289.
 Pease, Edward, 15.
 Pease, Joseph, first Friend who sits in Parliament, 15.
 Pease, Sir Joseph Whitwell, 150, 158, 159, 162, 164.
 Penington, Isaac, motto of, 68.
 Penney, Harrison, accompanies Isaac Sharp to Greenland, 47, 50, 67, 136.
 Peppermint Bay, 131.
 Perie, Dr., 233, 234.
 Peterson, Dr., 33.
 Peterson, William, 135.
 Philadelphia, 139, 254.
 Philipton, 115.
 Philippopolis, 184.
 Pierce, Dr., 209, 211.
 Pim, Captain and Mrs., 166, 170, 171, 173, 268.
 Piney Woods, 139.
 Port Said, 189, 273.
 Prentice Krall, 86.
 Procter, Hannah, becomes wife of Isaac Sharp, 17.
 Procter, Joseph and Elizabeth, 17.
 Procter, Joseph, son of preceding, 17.
 Procter, John Richardson, 17.
 Procter, John William, 172.
 Providence, "They who mark the hand of," 8, 161.
 Providence, U.S.A., 139.
 Pumphrey, Edwin, accompanies Isaac Sharp to Labrador, 56.
 Purdie, Samuel A., 143, 168, 255; decease of, 256.
 Radloff, Charles Henry, as companion, 83, 84, 85, 86.
 Ramallah, 277.
 Ramsay, Miss, 225.
 Ransome, Edwin R., 266.
 Rasalama, 122.
 Ras el Metn, 275.
 Rentril, Ernest, 47.
 Reykjavik, 32, 45.
 Rhoads, Jonathan E., 216.
 Richardson, Henry, accompanied Isaac Sharp to Iceland, 42.
 Rink, Dr., 48.
 Richmond, 139.
 Richsquare, 139.
 Robben Island leper and convict settlement, 82.
 Robert College, 188.
 Robson, Ernest, 264.
 Roisland, Tollay, 261.
 Rottingdean, 10.
 Saffron Walden, 13, 15, 133, 257.
 Saint Andrew of Crete, 97.
 Saint Gilles, 268.
 Salem, 207.
 San Francisco, 77, 135, 137, 202, 205, 223, 259.
 San José, 162, 206, 207.
 Sehneider, I. J., 50.
 Scott, Mr., 112.
 Sechele, Interview with, 98, 107; brings a goat, 99.
 Sehore, 192, 193.
 Seoni Malwa, 194.
 Sewell, Joseph, 121, 122, 126, 214.
 Shanghai, 215, 217, 218, 224, 227, 231, 235, 238, 239.
 Sharp, Ebenezer, 9.
 Sharp, Elizabeth, daughter of Isaac Sharp, 22.
 Sharp, Hannah, wife of Isaac Sharp, 17; entries in diary, 18; illness and death, 18-20.
 Sharp, Isaac, remarkable vision, 2; application in 1877 for travelling certificate, 2; seven years' journey, 3; dangers in South Africa, 4; passes "The Thirst," 5; in Khama's country, 6; thunder storm in Basutoland, 6; favourite saying, 8; total

- abstainer, 8; birth and parentage, 9; his mother's death, 9; school days, 11; life at Saffron Walden, 13, 15, 133, 257; own verses, 14, 17, 68, 131, 132, 173, 183, 240, 243; private secretary to Joseph Pease, 15; first appearance in ministry, 15; marriage with Hannah Procter, 17; his wife's illness and death, 18-20; is recorded as a minister, 22; various journeys as a minister, 23; first visit to Norway, 24; visits the King, 28; visits Orkney and Shetland Isles, 28; removes to Middlesbrough, 28; first visit to Iceland, 28, 35; visits Faroe Isles, 36-40; second visit to Iceland, 40-45; Greenland visited, 46-56; visits Labrador, 56-61; his character depicted, 62-78; favourite verse, "My Prayer," 66; reverses in business, 70; visits Norway with James Owen, 76; South Africa visited, 79-118; his watchword, 91; reaches Madagascar, 119; letter to sea captain, 119; slavery question, 125; addresses Queen of Madagascar, 128; encounter with savages, 128; leaves for Australia, 129; reaches Sydney, 130; reaches Tasmania, 131; in Queensland, 132; in New Zealand, 132; reaches San Francisco, 135; Baltimore, 137; illness at New Garden, 140; visits Whittier, 140; on pastors, 141, 247; visits Mexico, 143; returns to England, 143; life at Broadstairs, 146; his sister's decease, 153; resides at Ettington, 154; vision of angels, 163; certificate for further service, 164; goes to Paris and falls ill there, 167; returns to England, 171; Yearly Meeting of 1891, 177-182; starts for Constantinople, 183; illness in Red Sea, 191; reaches India, 192; reaches Japan, 199; reaches San Francisco, 205; visits Oregon, 207; illness in California, 208; leaves for China, 213; reaches China, 217; Chung King, 224; presentation of scrolls, 225; dangers of travel, 231; leaves China, 239; American Yearly Meetings, 246-253; Mexico, 255; Dublin Yearly Meeting, 257; reaches England, 260; last visit to Norway, 261; visits France, 267; his thought for others, 269; leaves for Syria, 273; Jerusalem, 277; returns to England, 278; his home interests, 279; last lecture, 281; returns to Ettington ill, 282; partial recovery, 283; issue no longer doubtful, 285; decease and funeral, 288.
- Sharp, John, 16.
 Sharp, Rebecca, sister of Isaac Sharp, 22.
 Sharp, Thomson, 9, 145, 155, 162, 281.
 Shelley, S. H. and E. and family, 162, 165, 182, 205, 207, 211, 241, 247, 256, 258.
 Shiloh, 115.
 Shillitoe, Thomas, visits Norway, 24.
 Shoshong, 5, 6, 99, 100, 102, 104, 106, 108.
 Skia-took, 252.
 Slavery in Madagascar, 125, 128.
 Smith, Joseph, 239.
 Sohagpur, 194.
 Southland College, 137.

- Spiceland, 139.
 Spindler, Charles, 47.
 Spurgeon, C. H., 111, 199.
 Stavanger, 27, 261.
 Steamboat Frank, 142.
 Stellenbosch, Meeting with students, 80, 82.
 Stepamian, Pastor, 187.
 Stephenson, George, 15.
 Steven, Mr., 239.
 Stewart Island, 8, 134, 144.
 Stirk Fontein, 90.
 Stratford-on-Avon, 161, 171.
 Sufferings, Meeting for, the standing executive committee of Society of Friends, 69, 177, 212.
 Swann, Rebecca, 9, 266.
 Sydney, 130, 133.
 Syria visited, 273-278.

 Table Mountain, 84.
 Tamatave, 119.
 Tasted, Elias, 24.
 Taylor, Dr. Bell, 162, 260.
 Taylor, Joseph and Kate, 194.
 Tennyson, 270.
 Terrell, Charles D. and Mrs., 192, 193.
 "Thirst," The, 5, 102.
 Thomas, Anna, 261.
 Thomas, Deborah C., 137.
 Thomas, Dr. James Carey, 253.
 Thomas, Dr. R. H., 137, 182, 253, 261.
 Thompson, Mr., 82.
 Thomson, Esther, 9.
 Thunderstorm, Terrific, 6, 113.
 Tidmanton, 116.
 Tokio, 201.
 Tonjoroff, Mr. and Mrs., 184, 185.
 Toronto, 247.
 Tredouw Pass Convict Station, 84.
 Tregelles, Edwin O., visits Norway with Isaac Sharp, 24, 26, 189, 262.

 Tuttle, Asa, 142.
 Valence, 268.
 Van Wyk, Mr., 108.
 Verborgten Fontein, 90.
 Victoria, 255.
 Vienna, 184.
 Villiersdorf, 83.

 Wade, Charles, 138.
 Wade, Sir Willoughby, 284.
 Waldmeier, Theophilus, 276.
 Walker, George Washington, 116.
 Walls, William A., 253, 254, 255.
 Warmow, M., 53.
 Washington, 139.
 Watson, John M., 253.
 Weir, Mr., 115.
 Weiz, Theodore, 158.
 Wellington, 79.
 Wellner, J. W., 51.
 Western Yearly Meeting, 250.
 Westman Islands visited, 31.
 Whitney, Dr. and M. C., 200, 201, 202, 215.
 Whittier visited, 140.
 Wigham, Leonard, 229, 231, 233.
 Wilberforce, William, 35.
 Williams, John H. and E., 194.
 Wilmington, 248.
 Wittebergen, 115.
 Woolman, John, 241.
 Wyandotte Indians, 252.
 Wycombe, 15.

 Yangtse Kiang, 218, 221; dangers of, 222, 231.
 Yenimahli, 186.
 Yokohama, 199, 201, 240.

 Zeerust, 96.
 Zephaniah, 115.
 Zulu war, 91.
 Zuurpoort, 90.

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